Backstreets

The Boss Magazine

#80 SUMMER/FALL 2004
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Springsteen's Rocktober Surprise

Bruce sits down and Stands Up

Patti reveals her Downtown Heart

Springsteen & Scialfa speak to Backstreets in separate, exclusive interviews

The Boss and the King ✦ Gary U.S. Bonds ✦ Marah

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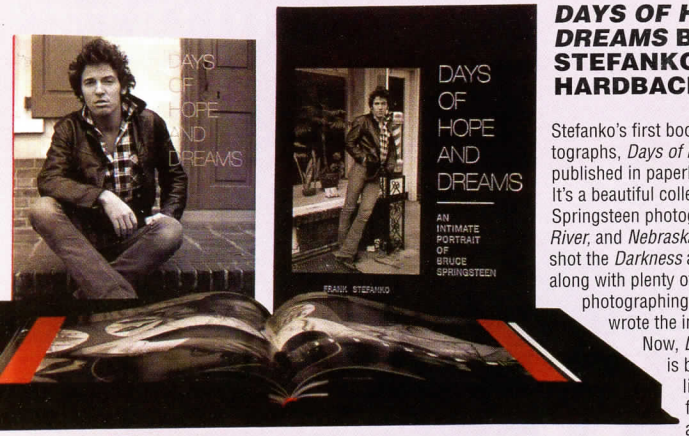

DAYS OF HOPE AND DREAMS BY FRANK STEFANKO / LTD. ED. HARDBACK WITH PRINT

Stefanko's first book of Springsteen photographs, *Days of Hope and Dreams*, was published in paperback in the fall of 2003. It's a beautiful collection of never-before seen Springsteen photographs from the *Darkness, River,* and *Nebraska* years, from the guy who shot the *Darkness* and *River* album covers, along with plenty of commentary about his days photographing Bruce. Springsteen himself wrote the introduction.

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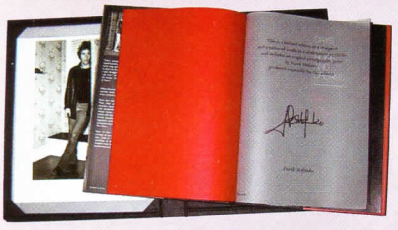

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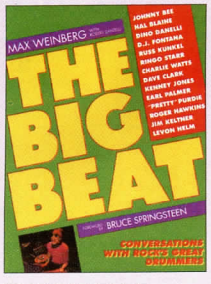

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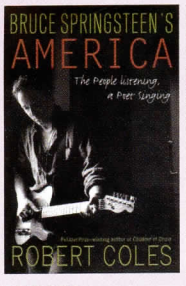

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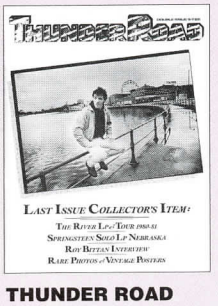

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JOHN CAVANAUGH PHOTO

"Bruce, where's your Dolphins hat, man?!" July 17, 2004.

Backstreets

THE BOSS MAGAZINE SINCE 1980

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Danny Clinch Photo

OFF THE WALL

ELVIS PRESLEY
3/8/60, in the office of Vernon Presley, Memphis, TN
Paul Lichter's Elvis Photo Archives

E-BOW THE LETTERS

COUNTRY FEEDBACK

Dear Editor:

Hats off to you for Andrew Massimino's article in issue #78, "The Politics of Dancing in the Dark"—and to Karin Schmidt-Rudloff for her letter in issue #79, and Robert Spinrad, whose letter appeared in #78.

I am an African-American—not what many would consider your "typical" Springsteen fan—with politics "to the left." A comic recently referred to someone like me during his act, the subject of a joke being "the only black Springsteen fan in America." A college roommate turned me on to Bruce when *Born to Run* was released. I became a full-fledged fan when I heard "Adam Raised a Cain." Clearly, he and many of his characters were outcasts, not part of the status quo. Early on, it was evident that Springsteen wanted no part of the status quo himself (he has said he was unnerved and uncomfortable with the hype of being on the covers of *Time* and *Newsweek* simultaneously), be it mainstream America or the stereotypical rock 'n' roll life.

On *Nebraska,* those characters were clearly outcasts, not necessarily solely due to rebellious choices of their own. Often they were unwitting victims of "the system," political and business decisions that changed the economic landscape. Many were forced into dire situations with no way out. In this area, Springsteen has been most consistent, as Massimino stated, in illustrating the "battle of the human spirit," or the haves vs. the have-nots. The world of *Nebraska* was quite contrary to the patriotic fantasies about which President Reagan preached.

And then there was *Born in the U.S.A.:* an almost completely upbeat album about disillusion, betrayal, self-doubt, economic disaster, broken relationships, nostalgia, hope, desire.... The message on that album was clear to me, which made me more shocked when Reagan tried to co-opt Springsteen's image during the 1984 election campaign. Being no fan of Reagan, I was automatically suspicious when news broadcasts initially stated that he even mentioned Springsteen's name. Bruce voiced his disgust at how his name was forced into the context of a campaign speech.

In 1985, I saw three of the last four tour-closing shows at the L.A. Coliseum, and what Springsteen did on this last leg clearly spelled out his political position. The show began with "Born in the U.S.A." and a 40-foot U.S. flag backdrop, which fell to the floor as the second song began. The second song was "Badlands." Am I the only one in the States or in the "Springsteen world" who got this?

Massimino gave a list of the "leftist" causes with which Bruce has supported or aligned himself in the subsequent years. Along with the Dixie Chicks controversy last year, there were two other things to mention: Springsteen's nightly message to three prominent Christian Right leaders to kiss-where-the-sun-don't-shine during the intro to "I'm A Coward" on the *Tunnel of Love* tour; and "American Skin (41 Shots)." The reaction to "41 Shots" was totally knee-jerk, with "fans" and law enforcement exhibiting almost a mob mentality against the singer and song. The controversy also points to further denial of problems that still exist in our country. Yet many of these same people still buy Springsteen's records and attend his shows. With "Another Thin Line," "Code of Silence," and his "PSA" in '03, Bruce continues to present difficult questions on subjects that are right in front of us every day (particularly the war, the current administration, and issues of class and race).

As Ms. Schmidt-Rudloff is German, I would also note that there are many Americans, like Mr. Spinrad, who are in agreement with her take on this matter. The enduring curiosity is how Springsteen's fans on the "other side" expect him to "keep his mouth shut" on his views, apparently to further their own false sense of comfort and entertainment. Their alternative is to speak with their pocketbooks and not buy his records or attend shows—to not support this form of entertainment.

However, Springsteen is not just an entertainer, but also an artist. Artists often pose uncomfortable questions to society. This is nothing new. The degrees of extremism in reaction to Springsteen's music and comments are alarming and indicative of the current political climate in the U.S. Mr. Spinrad was absolutely correct in his observation of "'freedom of speech' in the 21st century." I personally hope that Springsteen, the Dixie Chicks and other artists, prominent or not, continue to speak out, with no conditions attached. This is America, isn't it?

T. Westbrook
via e-mail

BAD DAY

Dear Editor:

Bruce Springsteen's reprinting of Al Gore's May 26th NYU speech on his official website, and his endorsement of the invidious and confounded views expressed in that speech, is a source of great embarrassment to many of his loyal fans. Never before have I been so disappointed in someone who I otherwise hold in such high regard.

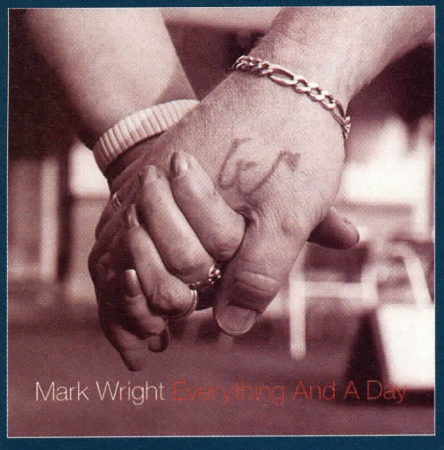
Dick Bourne
via e-mail

IGNORELAND

Dear Editor:

I'm boycotting Bruce Springsteen, and I'm burning everything I ever collected and own by him (and I own a lot) due to the concert Democratic redderick [sic]. I cannot support these liberals who have no idea of what *freedom* is, yet they wear flags on stage, and they sing songs we embrace as patriotic rock-versions of celebrations of America. I can no longer sit back and watch the blood of my ancestors who fought to make us free boil on the soil of this earth in anger over such Anti-American sentiment by the Democrats. The Republicans, AKA "The North" in the time of Abe Lincoln, was the party responsible for freeing the slaves. Bruce has made more money with tax cuts made by who? Republicans.

I am a woman, and I never waver my thought of voting Republican, because even if abortions remain legal because of Democrats, with their taxation plans, it is possible if I ever want one that I won't have any pay-



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check left to afford one.

What is freedom? And at what price are you willing to spend your time at a concert talking *against* it? I am highly offended and I will *never ever* again be a Bruce fan. I'm not fooled by his Born in the U.S.A. lies.

S. Cote
via e-mail

HALF A WORLD AWAY

Dear Editor:

I fully support the Boss and what he is trying to do. I am a 47-year-old woman, a postal worker and union member as well as a mother, with two sons in the U.S. Army Reserve College program, ages 19 and 20. I am in fact a veteran who served her country for six years in the U.S. Army. My husband retired after 22 years of service in the Army. Just because I am a liberal does not mean I do not love my country or believe in service. But we have a President who has no idea of the demands and sacrifice required during war, no idea what the common man goes through in life.

I wanted to write Bruce and tell him of my only two children, and how they are both being sent to Iraq. As a fan of many years, I wanted him to know that what he is doing, speaking out, speaks directly to me, and how grateful I am to have such a loud and powerful voice added to mine.

Cherry Emel
State College, PA

THESE DAYS

Dear Editor:

First of all, I want to congratulate you for your great Bruce interview about the "Vote for Change" tour. I think he read your "Conversation" editorial in Backstreets #76 and decided to talk directly to his fans.

As a French and European fan, I also want to react to the debate about Bruce's commitment in the Presidential election. I'm particularly shocked with many points of view I read on Bruce forums online. As a Bruce follower for 25 years, I'm not surprised he expressed his view in such a crucial year for the States—and the world. As you said in "The Politics of Dancing in the Dark" [*Backstreets* #78], Bruce remains very constant in his sensibility and point of view.

Can the man who wrote "Land of Hope and Dreams" or "The Ghost of Tom Joad" close his mouth, his mind, and his heart when the administration takes a political direction so contrary to his own values? I think of the last lines of "The Ghost of Tom Joad," taken from the Steinbeck book. Like Woody Guthrie or Bob Dylan in the past, Bruce Springsteen expresses his thoughts today with courage and respect, and he opens the debate, allowing his fans to speak about matters other than the latest bootleg. I think that his op-ed in *New York TImes* stands among his best writings. Bruce wouldn't have been Bruce if he stayed silent in this time. And, as fans, we live one of the most interesting periods of the career of this still relevant artist. Fans, don't forget that his train carries winners and losers, saints and sinners...

Thierry Saurat
Sant-Luce-Sur-Loire, France

STUMBLE

Dear Editor:

After reading your [online] interview with Bruce on the political concerts, a couple of points came to mind. I am a longtime fan and a subscriber to your magazine. I have not missed a Bruce tour since the '70s, and indeed I have been to multiple shows each tour. He says he doubts if any longtime fans were surprised, but I am both surprised and disheartened. Springsteen is one of my life's personal heroes, and I have burned in my mind the lyrics to just about every song I have been able to get my hands on over the years. As a conservative in my viewpoints, I always appreciated the class he brought to the issues, at least until lately. Being for the underdog and the everyday man, and recognizing many of the ironies in life and policy was always appealing to me. Indeed, I can agree with Bruce on many of the overlying themes, and I applauded his detachment from everyday political bickering and propaganda. But he says it is a big election, and I also agree with that.

I could argue the merits of the opinions Bruce now openly expresses. I could argue that nobody misled anyone into war, and that multiple reasons were given for the action against Iraq. As a humanitarian, I could argue that the ousting of such a pathetic tyrant was reason enough, if not the years and years of UN resolutions that the other members did not want to enforce. I could also argue the theory of taxes and tax cuts, and the huge problems with the entitlement society we've created. I could argue that John Kerry is a shameless liberal, who has voted against every type of intelligence or military expenditure possible and missed most of the Intelligence Committee meetings leading up to the so-called "intelligence failure." We could all go on and on. And I have no illusions that both sides in the political fight are going to spin their message in the quest for political power.

But once upon a time, Bruce was above all that, and his message stood above the spin. And you at *Backstreets* know how serious we Bruce fans feel the message of the music and the man we have all cherished all these years. That is what makes my disappointment so severe.

If you doubt that I am truly a longtime fan, I can tell you I was there in 1980 outside Greensboro Coliseum, when the weather was one degree outside, and we camped for three nights and froze to death for seats. I was front-row center, and Bruce fell back into our arms in the audience during "Tenth Avenue Freeze-out." What a show, and what a night.

I wonder if Bruce understands the fans out here like me, or if his message if always tainted by the political prism.

David R. Castranio
Cary, NC

FIND THE RIVER

Dear Editor:

What stood out for me most in *Backstreets* #79 was the wonderful interview of Emmylou Harris by Bob Muller. For me, they represent two vital touchstones in Springsteen's career, and it was fun being a part of their conversation as fans and colleagues. Well done on your choice of interviewer and subject, and well done, Bob!

It reminded me of the Muller interview by Jonathan Pont in the Vietnam Veterans Benefit retrospective in *Backstreets* #72, so I went back and reread it.

So now, I know this is a long time in coming, but I want to thank you for that feature in issue #72. It captures the night perfectly, in all its cathartic glory.

The retrospective succeeds in putting the show in its proper historical context as an American Cultural Event. It's clear the benefit succeeded on every level, from artistry and musicianship to humanitarian cause and political consciousness-raiser. But it's Muller's insights as to the political landscape at the time that, for me, clarify how instrumental Springsteen and the E Street Band were to the survival of the V.V.A. and in turn the movement's impact on Springsteen as a writer and performer. It seems to me this night, more than the MUSE Concerts or even the Amnesty Tour, crystallized what artist and audience working "in concert" could really accomplish. It's incredible, really, how "one wild night of rock 'n' roll" could be at the healing center of a community that was and may still be "shining a light down that dark alley." Man, I wish I'd been there!

Glen Gaston
Toronto, Canada

RADIO SONG

Dear Editor:

Charles Cross' piece on Ed Sciaky in issue # 79 had special significance to me. I had the pleasure and privilege of getting to know Ed a bit during the last year of his life, as he helped greatly with the article I wrote [for this issue]. At one point, I had a question regarding something Bruce might have told Ed a long time ago. Ed couldn't recall the details, but he was nice enough to offer to ask Bruce himself on *Backstreets'* behalf the next time they met. True to his word, and much to my surprise, Ed actually remembered to ask when he met briefly with Bruce backstage in Philadelphia last summer. Unfortunately, Bruce's response, according to Sciaky, was something along the lines of "Eddie, I really don't remember, either." Maybe not exactly an insightful answer, but knowing Sciaky's history with the magazine, I thought you'd like knowing that he went to bat for *Backstreets* one last time. As Bruce himself said, "He will be greatly missed".

Shawn Poole
Philadelphia, PA

If we could just start talkin'...

Moving Day

By Christopher Phillips

And we thought our relocation was going to be the big news.

While Bruce Springsteen was between albums and tours this summer, it seemed like a good time for *Backstreets* to make the move my wife and I had been eyeing for a while, from Washington, DC to Chapel Hill, North Carolina. As it turned out, we picked the same week that Springsteen not only announced an E Street Band mini-tour but also decided to talk to *Backstreets* for the very first time.

If you visit Backstreets.com, you've probably already read our first Springsteen interview, posted on August 4. We see the website as the place for breaking news, and we rarely get more breaking than that. (Of course, the Q&A is reprinted in its entirety in this issue as well, starting on the next page.) For those who have been waiting as long as I have—or longer—for a *Backstreets* interview, the magazine seemed like a good place to provide a little more context. After all, that exchange with Springsteen came as faith rewarded—not just for me and *Backstreets,* but for the community of fans that has been supporting this effort for years.

If you've been reading *Backstreets* for a little while, you're probably aware that, until this summer, we've never had an interview with the man. We've written plenty about it in this space, and you can imagine how often the idea of a *"Backstreets* Interview" has come up around our office. When assistant editor Andrew Massimino came on board back in the summer of 2000, we came up with a four-year plan—within four years, we decided, a Bruce interview was somehow going to become a reality. We were half-joking, since the "plan" didn't consist of much besides making those interview requests, keeping our fingers crossed, and continuing to do the best job we could. What else could we do? Hopping a singer's gate at three in the morning and knocking on the door doesn't have a history of working out too well (see page 36).

Fact is, Springsteen doesn't do many interviews at all. So while we've had our share of frustrations—being a magazine devoted solely to covering his career but having our interview requests come up empty for decades—it's also been easy enough to look around and say, "Okay, he only talked to the *New York Times* this time around... I guess we're not alone." We've held out hope over the years, kept asking, and kept doing what we always did, creating the best fan-based magazine and website we knew how. Do we *need* to talk to Bruce to do our job? As *Backstreets* nears the quarter-century mark, we've grown to realize the answer is "no." But despite all those explanations and rationalizations, when the preliminary phone call came—from Springsteen's publicist, asking if we'd like to talk to Bruce about his upcoming tour—it was one of the most thrilling, surreal moments I can remember. The four-year plan: somehow, it worked!

That phone call was also uncannily timed: it was literally the very last call we took at the DC office—just as we were about to unplug the phones. The place was empty except for a broom, a few piles of dust, and a last stack of CDs for the road. As I held the phone to my ear, I stared at the moving truck parked outside, packed with every other thing from our offices—including the tape recorder I use for interviews—and I was told, "It has to happen in two days. Is that going to work?"

Those next two days were a mad dash—anyone who has moved knows how that goes, and moving both home and office is a double whammy. To top it off, the movers were a day late, and in the hours before the interview we were still unloading the truck and searching for the phones. The tape recorder turned up at the last minute, and thankfully the batteries still had enough juice (even if I didn't, as it had been a mostly sleepless week). When the phone rang, I pulled up a box, took a deep breath, and still couldn't quite believe that the inaugural phone call in the new HQ might actually be coming from the man who inspired this magazine in the first place.

No one asked me to "hold for Bruce Springsteen." It was just that familiar raspy voice saying, "Hey Chris—it's Bruce!" I couldn't tell you how many times I've heard those words over the phone as a practical joke, and part of me still felt like that's what this was. On the upside, I had been too busy dealing with the move to panic about the impending interview. Still, it'd be nice to be able to tell you I played it cool, but as I picked up the phone and reality sank in, I think my brain short-circuited for a moment. Thankfully, what seemed like five minutes of stunned silence in my head was only a few seconds on the tape. And once I got my mouth in gear, Springsteen was very forthcoming, with quick, thoughtful responses that made my job easy.

At this point—in our little world, at least—the idea of a definitive *"Backstreets* Interview" with Springsteen had taken on such massive weight, it would be hard to have an exchange that could possibly live up to what we've imagined over the years. So it was a relief in some ways to have this talk be a short one, on a very specific topic (I was told we'd have 20 or 30 minutes; Springsteen kindly spoke for about 45). Would I like to ask questions for hours on end about his craft, his entire career? Hey, is the Pope Catholic? Can Roy Bittan play "Chopsticks"? But while there were no rules given for this talk, staying focused on the issues raised by the Vote for Change tour felt like the right thing to do—rather than touching briefly on the tour and then trying to sneak in questions about "Electric Nebraska." If the Vote for Change effort was what finally made Springsteen want to engage this group of fans more directly, let's let him engage: to fully address aspects of this upcoming effort that might not get the space or the airtime in mainstream media—including his history of activism, his view of how art and politics mix, and his recognition of those among his audience who don't see eye-to-eye with him.

It comes as no surprise that there are those who take issue with Springsteen's stance. As he joked to Ted Koppel: "For those about to be lambasted, we salute you." But while I've been bombarded by hundreds of profane and angry emails from alleged Springsteen fans, incensed by his stand and claiming to have burned their collections, I get a strong sense that, rather than a groundswell of *Backstreets* readers, they were pointed our way from some ultra-conservative organization. It's been discouraging to read such vicious reactions to a concerned artist speaking his mind—especially one with such an established history of passionate social criticism. But the correspondence I've gotten from the more conservative members of the *Backstreets* community has been largely even-tempered, along the lines of "I guess I'll have to sit this one out." So far we've had a total of three subscription cancellations—and to a person, they've been exceedingly nice. One writes: "You guys at *Backstreets* have been great over the years, I wish you all the best in the future." Hey, back atcha, my friend. Everybody has to figure out their own stands to take, just as everybody's alone in the voting booth.

Despite what you see in this issue's Letters column, or in our first Springsteen interview, we have no intention of becoming a political rag. Our mission remains to cover what matters to

Continued next page

IN INTER VIEW

Bruce tops bill in October Surprise

Citizen Bruce

By Christopher Phillips

DANNY CLINCH PHOTO

"Demanding accountability from our leaders, that is our job as citizens," Bruce Springsteen told his fans in Washington, DC and around the U.S. last year. Now he and other vigilant citizens are taking to the road to do just that. Springsteen elaborates in an exclusive interview with *Backstreets*.

Bruce Springsteen has directly entered the political fray of this fall's election, leading a coalition of artists through the so-called "swing states" to call for the election of John Kerry on November 2. One year after the *Rising* tour wrapped at Shea Stadium, Springsteen will be bringing the E Street Band together for five arena dates in early October (with a potential sixth date in Miami pending as this issue goes to press).

Joining them for concerts in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, and Florida (with nary a show in Springsteen's New Jersey stronghold) will be R.E.M., John Fogerty, and Bright Eyes, making this the first Springsteen tour with an opening act since John Wesley Harding opened the Berkeley shows of the *Tom Joad* solo-acoustic tour in 1995.

Along with additional artists such as Pearl Jam, Dave Matthews Band, Jurassic 5, and Bonnie Raitt, Springsteen has thrown his considerable artistic and commercial power behind this Vote for Change series of concerts—presented by MoveOn (www.moveonpac.org), benefitting America Coming Together (www.actforvictory.org)—to rally support for change in the coming election. It's a twist that, predictably, brought a few shouts, with conservative politicians, pundits, and more than a few Springsteen fans decrying his "sudden" political activism. Why has Citizen Bruce, after decades of expressing social commentary through his art, decided to speak out loud and clear?

We thought we'd ask him.

In his first-ever *Backstreets* interview, Springsteen spoke with editor Christopher Phillips in the days leading up to the August 4 Vote for Change tour announcement. Making clear what has long been expressed through his body of work, Springsteen discussed the motivation behind his involvement: "This is probably the most important election of my lifetime... given what I've written about, the things that I've wanted our band to stand for over the years, it's just too big a battle to lay out of."

Springsteen spoke in unambiguous terms about his hopes for this country, his convictions about the role of the artist in society, his perspective on the relationship between music and politics, and the complexities of his responsibility to his audience.

You've supported a lot of causes over the years, but as political and socially conscious as a lot of your work has been, this is the first time you've really weighed in on electoral politics. So I guess the big question is, why now?

Basically, this is probably the most important election of my lifetime. I think that the government has drifted too far from American values. After 9/11, I was like everybody else—I supported going into Afghanistan, and I felt tremendous unity in the country that I don't think I've ever felt exactly like that before.

Continued from page 6

serious Springsteen fans—his current activities, his recorded works, his performances, and the themes therein. But we do encourage all of the U.S. citizens in our readership to make your voice heard and cast your vote on November 2. And we do respect the hell out of Springsteen for speaking out, taking a stand, and impelling fans to think about and talk about the issues that face this country, whether you agree with him or not. As Iris Dement sings on 1996's *The Way I Should*, "That seems pretty damn American to me."

C'MON CAROLINE: Just another word about our move to Chapel Hill—which was the subject of this entire column, before we stopped the presses and held up this issue for the Vote for Change news. *Backstreets* has now settled in our new digs, and those boxes (including the one I sat on for the interview) are unpacked. To contact us at our new HQ (to subscribe or renew your subscription, send a letter to the editor, etc.), you can write us at Backstreets, 1818 Airport Road #300, Chapel Hill, NC 27514; fax (919) 968-9622; call (919) 968-9466; or use the same toll-free number we've had for years, 1-800-326-BOSS. This is only the second time we've moved our base of operations since *Backstreets* started publishing in Seattle back in 1980. If the first order of business in North Carolina was any indication, we're off to a good start—a pretty good office-warming present, if you ask me.

And finally, a word of thanks to everyone who made our four-year term in Washington, DC a great one. First and foremost to Curtis Cleland—Peapack, NJ's favorite son and a true Bruce scholar (if not a gentleman); Mike Newell and Magnus Lauglo, who helped keep the office running along the way; neighbors and scribes Lisa Iannucci, Craig Scupp, and Anthony Castrovince; and Tramps-about-town Bobby Muller, Guy Aceto, Bob Crane, Stacie Tobin, Debbie Robinson, Flynn "Born to Run" McLean, Cathy Vocke, Anna Selden, Brian Svoboda, Chris Murray, Dominic Toto, Vernon Drummond, Phil Kuntz, George Rippey, Leannah Harding, Paul Chernoff, and everybody else who dropped by the office, burned a CD, or otherwise brightened our days in the District. We'll see you on the road.

It was a moment of great sadness, but also tremendous possibility. And I think that was dashed when we jumped headlong into the Iraq war, which I never understood, and I talked about that on the road. I never understood how or why we really ended up there. We offered up the lives of the best of our young people under circumstances that have been discredited. I had to live through that when I was young myself, and for any of us that lived through the Vietnam War, it was just very devastating.

Along with that, the deficits, the squeezing of services like the after-school services for the kids who need it the most, the big windfall tax cuts, the division of wealth that has threatened our connection to one another over the past 20 years that is increasing.... these are things that as the election time neared—I couldn't really keep true to the ideas that I'd written about for 30 years without weighing in on this one.

I don't think I've seen anything like it before in my lifetime. I think that the freedoms that we've taken for granted—I spoke about this on the road a little bit, too—they are slowly being eroded. In the past I've gotten involved in a lot of grassroots organizations that sort of expressed my views, and where I thought I could be of some small help. I guess I've been doing that for about 20 years, and that was a way that I was very happy to work. I always believed that it was good for the artist to remain distant from the seat of power, to retain your independent voice, and that was the way I liked to conduct my work. But the stakes in this one are just too high. I felt like, given what I've written about, the things that I've wanted our band to stand for over the years, it's just too big a battle to lay out of.

A lot of great, unique artists are coming together for these shows—R.E.M., Pearl Jam, Jurassic 5, Bonnie Raitt—so I'm guessing that even with the unity of at least one common goal, there will be some different viewpoints. How much expression of that do you think there will be? Will we get different perspectives from different artists?

I would imagine so—as different as all the artists involved. I think we've all come together with one goal in mind, but I think everybody's idea of where it goes from there could very well be different. Myself, I like John Kerry a lot. I don't think he has all the answers, or that John Edwards has all the answers, but I think they have the experience, the life experience, and I think they have the sincerity to ask the hard questions about America and to try to search for honest solutions. I believe they're going to do that. And I don't feel that way about the guys who are in there right now. I feel that trust has been broken, and there's no going back.

What did you think of Kerry's speech [at the Democratic National Convention]?

I thought it was fantastic—the best one I've heard him give.

And using "No Surrender" for his entrance music—is that something the campaign clears with you in advance?

No—somebody mentioned to me that they'd heard it at different rallies here and there, around the country... but it was a nice call.

You've focused a whole lot more on issues than labels or parties over the years—whether that's Democrat, Republican, Independent, Reform, Green, or anything else. That has appeared to be a very conscious decision, so in this case was it just that things reached a tipping point?

Yeah, I would say. I mean, I grew up in a Democratic house. The only political discussion I ever remember in my house was when I came home from school when I was little—I think someone asked me at school what we were, it must have been during an election season at some point, and I was probably around my son's age, eight or nine. And I came home and said, "Mom, what are we?" And she said, "Oh, we're Democrats. We're Democrats because they're for the working people." And that was it—that was the political discussion that went on in my house over about 18 years.

So I've always held progressive beliefs, or liberal beliefs. I think that when I went to write—you're shaped by your background, fundamentally, there's no getting around it. I lived in a household that was caught in the squeeze, endlessly trying to make ends meet. My mother running down to the finance company, borrowing money to have a Christmas, and then paying it back all year until the next Christmas and borrowing some more. So I know what that's like. This time out, there just wasn't really any way I could sit on the sidelines.

That makes me think about that "criticism" you always seem to get: how can a millionaire still write about blue collar concerns? Something similar gets leveled at Edwards: he's the son of a mill worker, and yet he turned into a millionaire lawyer, as if one negates the other. But clearly those formative experiences help shape how you see the world.

That criticism is also a tremendously muddled idea of how writers write. First of all, have you ever been to Mark Twain's house?

No, I never have.

It's *really nice [laughs]*. The room he wrote in is beautiful.

It wasn't a whitewashed shack with a bunch of frogs hopping around outside?

No, it's a really beautiful Victorian home. So it's been done before! *[laughs]*... It seems to me that particular criticism gets aimed at musicians rather than, say, filmmakers. Nobody complains that Marty Scorcese isn't actually in the Mafia. It always comes up—I've settled into the fact that I'll be answering that question for the rest of my working life. But it's a muddled understanding of the way that things get written.

Well, I hear you've been writing up a storm these days.

People say that all the time. I wish that were true!

Just wondering if we should be looking for any new material on the tour, if you've written anything for it specifically?

I'm always trying... I don't have anything until I have it, you know? Actually, I took a lot of time off—Patti was working on her record, and so I've been spending time with the kids, and I enjoyed watching her work. I'm always writing, I'm always trying to come up with something, but until I have it, I don't have it. So I can't predict.

You've said that "a writer writes to be understood." And there's been so much misinterpretation of your songs over the years, the obvious ones being "Born in the U.S.A." and "American Skin (41 Shots)." For the most part, you've let your songs do the talking, but I'm wondering, in addition to the changes these shows are trying to effect in the country, if you think this will give your audience more clarity as far as the meaning and intent of your writing?

I don't know, it's possible. Basically, I have faith in the songs. And I also surrender to the reality that once your songs are out there, that you're simply another voice in the ongoing discussion to define them. That's just the way it plays. And that's okay—I think they're out there to be debated, some of them. It's funny with "American Skin," I do run into people who thoroughly believed the *New York Post*'s interpretation of that piece of music! But I've also run into a lot of people who completely understood what I was trying to say. And that's the way that it goes. When those songs go out there, then you add your voice to the chorus of people fighting for their definition and what they stand for. I have an edge, because I've still got the guitar in my hand.

But it's possible—it's not something I thought about, but it may.

In the past when you've felt the need to define something more clearly—I'm thinking right now of "Empty Sky" at the [2003] Atlantic City show, when you made it very clear what you intended "an eye for an eye" to mean—what goes through your head when you decide to clarify things like that?

I have no compunction about stopping and telling someone what I mean. There's a moment to do that. And so, hey, I had the stage at the moment *[laughs]*, and generally if I feel any sort of recurring misunderstanding that's occurred more than a few nights running, I'll say, "Okay, there's a *few* people...." Maybe there's 100, maybe there's ten. Maybe there's two. Maybe I'm just hearing the guy who's making the noise at that moment. But in the end, I am speaking to you. I'm speaking to you individually.

DEBRA L. ROTHENBERG PHOTO

August 14, 2004
Randall's Island, NY

DANNY CLINCH PHOTO

And so I don't have a problem stopping at a particular moment and making clear my intentions. And now with the fabulous help of the Internet *[laughs]*, those intentions are instantaneously around the world, and it helps clear things up even faster.

Well, hey, happy we could be of service!

Or muddle things even quicker, I suppose.... But when you have an audience the size of mine, that audience is broad. And when I spoke about the Iraq war during this past tour, before the truth came out, there were people who cheered, and there were people who booed. And that's the way it rolls. I tended to keep my comments down to approximately two minutes at the end of the night, which I felt was a pretty good balance to the three hours that we'd spent playing, you know?

I do believe that you serve at the behest of the audience. But, at the same time, I believe that my ideas and the beliefs that our band has stood for over the years are an integral part of our work, and we have a *duty* to make those ideas as clear as possible. To make our stand at different moments as clear as possible. I think that's part of what people look to us for, that's a part of what we have provided to a portion of our audience. And I think on any given night I'm playing to many of my audiences out there. There's the *Tom Joad* audience, there's the "Dancing in the Dark" audience, but hey, they're all there at that particular moment. So I look at it as a part of our process. You also figure, these are the times we're working in. And I think you've got to take your stand in them.

When some conservative fans bristled at some of that stuff last summer, like your mention of the Al Franken book, I think some people felt that it was a contradiction of your welcome to fans of all political persuasions. I guess I always just took that as, "Everybody is welcome here, but that doesn't mean that I won't speak my mind or challenge you on occasion."

That's right. It's pretty simple. I don't need people cheering everything I'm doing—I don't go out expecting that, and we've done enough that I've seen both sides of the coin. And that's all right. The show is a forum of ideas. That's one of the things that we try to provide over the course of the evening. And as such, that's part of what you're getting when you walk through the doors.

Which shouldn't come as a surprise to anybody who has been following you for any decent length of time. Some fans seem to have been taken aback by the posting of Al Gore's speech on your website, or the impeachment jokes onstage, but it seems to me that your political stance and your social concerns have been consistent for a long time.

Yeah, I would be surprised if there are *longtime* fans who were surprised. I could see somebody who casually comes in and out depending on what you're doing, or on a particular song, but I think if you followed us over the past 30 years, our positions on most social issues have been consistent and straightforward.

Some people may have blinders on and just choose not to see it, or choose to take the "good parts" and leave the rest.

That's true—I think that part of the audience/artist relationship is one of intense identification. "You're me, I'm you." That is a big part of the deal. And I think part of what we do is say, "Well, yeah, we *are* one. But we are not the *same* one."

I love John Wayne's work like crazy. I've found great inspiration and soul in it my whole life. I'm not a fan of John Wayne's *politics*. But I love John Wayne, and I love the work he's done. And so that's how it bounces sometimes.

So who inspires you not just artistically but politically as well? It looks like John Fogerty is going to be on the bill, and his songs seem to be a touchstone for you in that way.

Really, if I go back to it, when I was really young, even with Steel Mill, we did the local benefits, marches down to Washington in the late '60s. So the truth of it is, if you're in my generation and if you grew up in any part of the alternative culture, that was just a part of your birthright. Whether you want to call it activism, or concerned citizenry, that came as a part of those times. I find it unusual when I meet people who did *not* have that experience from my generation. They are out there, you know? But for me and most of my friends, those were things that were just a part of growing up when we did. And the people who we admired and emulated—which for me obviously begins with Dylan—had a very clear political voice. John [Fogerty] did it more subtly, but fabulously also.

And so I took my own spin on it. I couldn't exactly tell you why I started writing in that direction. It's funny, Steve [Van Zandt] went on to be one of the most political songwriters, but back in the early times, he was like, "I don't know if those should mix." *[laughs]* That's classic Steve—when he goes, he *goes!* There's no coming back! That's Steve Van Zandt. *[laughs]*

But yeah, when I was very young, maybe it was because of my background, or because of the music that I liked—I was interested in the class-conscious music of the Animals—these are things that spoke to me and that I also wanted to address in my own music. That was really the way I came to it. I didn't have a political education when I was young, as I said, I didn't really grow up in a political family. The politics in my town were small-town politics. So it was something that, in truth, I really came to through popular music. Through a combination of the times and popular music.

As political awakenings go, I've always had the impression that the time around* The River *was big for both you and Steve, as far as getting out of the States and seeing our country through other eyes.

I know for Steve it was a tremendous awakening, that tour. More so for him maybe than for me, because I had kind of started to write about it on *Darkness on the Edge of Town* and *The River* already, really before we went overseas. But I know for Steve it was tremendous. We went to East Berlin together, and it was quite an experience, East Berlin at that time. It was real noticeable, what that does to you. And

also, when you spend a good amount of time over there, you do have a moment to step out of the United States and look back with a critical eye.

If there was one single thing I'd like to give every high school kid in the United States, it would be a two-month trip through Europe at some point during the formative years. Because it's very difficult to conjure up a real worldview from within our borders. It's *hard*. It's hard because we're so big, and the hegemony of American culture is so weighty and so heavy that it's very difficult without stepping outside and realizing what it's like to have the next country just a two-hour drive away, to have a certain kind of interdependence that is different than what we have here. It's just a certain view of the way the world works that is different. So if I could give every young kid one thing, that would be it—because it would broaden what we listen to, the way we perceive ourselves, the types of leaders we choose. It would change the nation dramatically.

I always remember going down to South America on the Amnesty tour and hearing *incredible* music, or going into Africa and seeing some amazing acts that opened up for us on that tour, and realizing that only a miniscule amount of people are going to hear this music back in the United States. Meanwhile, a six- or seven-piece rock band from Central Jersey is playing the Ivory Coast, and people who have barely heard our music before are going crazy. And we're speaking English, you know? The openness I've found outside the United States contrasted a bit to some of the closedness that we have here. And it's not intentional – it's cultural. And it comes from a lack of exposure to other things.

What opened your eyes to some of those things initially? On the* River *tour you talked about the Joe Klein book,* Woody Guthrie: A Life. *Was that book pivotal for you?

That's a big book, a very powerful book. I was looking for ways that other people went about creating work that spoke to all of these things—emotional, and social, and political, the environment of the day. How did other people do that? How did they balance their creative instincts and their political instincts? I was a very different creature in that, hey, I was a successful pop musician, and that changes the cards to some degree. But at the same time, what's at the heart of it is still the same sort of questing after the country that you're carrying in your heart, the country that you want your kids to grow up in. So I studied all of my forefathers very intently along the way. And I just put together something that felt right for us, and for me.

One of the purposes of art is to reflect our world back to us. And there's so much animosity and fear surrounding that right now—a lot of people, the whole "shut up and sing" faction, seem to think that's not what an artist should be doing. But considering the folk tradition you're a part of, thinking about Woody Guthrie, "shut up and sing" is a real oxymoron.

First of all, there's a long tradition of artist involvement in the nation's social and political life. Woody Guthrie, Bob Dylan, James Brown, Curtis Mayfield, Public Enemy... not only was their music joyous and exhilarating, but it was *timely*. And it was essential, for me, to understanding some of the events of the day. When they spoke, I heard myself speaking. I felt a connectedness. So I think that any time somebody in this country is telling somebody else to shut up, they're going in the wrong direction. No, no, no, you're supposed to be *promoting* speech. You may like it, you may not like it—I hear a lot of things I don't like, either, but hey. *[laughs]*

Also, if you listen to the airwaves and the level of discussion out there, we can't screw it up. It's already broke! It's screwed already *[laughs]*. So it's not like the musicians are going to come in and screw all this up now, you know? That's not going to happen.

It's amazing how violent some of the reactions have been—like what happened to Linda Rondstadt last week in Vegas.

A tragicomedy... *[laughs]* The description of it was hilarious, you know? The idea that people actually got worked up enough to throw drinks, pull down concert posters, and storm the lobby or whatever, and that they felt the need to escort her *off the premises*—for mentioning a *film*. That's scary. Or even the Dixie Chicks, who were pounded so relentlessly. So it's kind of crazy. But right now we live in very divided times; people's feelings about these issues are very intense, and people are going to have strong responses to anybody coming out and moving toward one side or the other. Particularly if it's somebody who you like, or whose music you admire. I think for a lot of people it severs a part of that artist/audience bond. But that bond is a little more complicated than that. It's just a little more complicated. I know what you're saying: I think we're waiting for the drums to start.

Considering how divided things are, ideally, what's your goal on this tour? What's the message, or the result that you're looking for?

Well, the best thing is that we have a very simple result in mind—and that result is to change the administration in November. So at its core, it's a very direct goal. At the same time, working with MoveOn and America Coming Together, we're trying to get voters registered, trying to get people mobilized to vote, trying to get people out on the street to mobilize the progressive voters, to get people involved in the democratic process. That's the means to the end. But the end is very clear for this short tour: we're out trying to change the direction of the government, to add our voices to the folks who are trying to make a change at the top.

SWING SHIFT

Bruce Springsteen & the E Street Band with R.E.M., Bright Eyes, and special guest John Fogerty

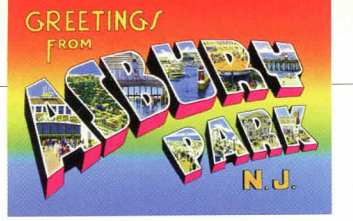
October 1	**Philadelphia, PA**
October 2	**Cleveland, OH**
October 3	**Detroit, MI**
October 5	**St. Paul, MN**
October 8	**Orlando, FL**
October 10	**Miami, FL***

***unconfirmed as of press time**

The Vote for Change concerts will bring a large coalition of musicians into numerous battleground states in the month before election day, playing multiple cities simultaneously. Artists include Pearl Jam, Dave Matthews Band, Dixie Chicks, John Mellencamp, Keb' Mo', Babyface, Death Cab for Cutie, Ben Harper, Bonnie Raitt, Jackson Browne, James Taylor, My Morning Jacket, and Jurassic 5.

Shedding some light on how the gameplan came together and what we can expect, Springsteen manager Jon Landau talked to *Billboard:* "These artist citizens all feel the need to speak out. They will do that respectfully and intelligently, then let the chips fall where they may.... We wanted to do something different this time. The Live Aid model—get Giants Stadium, get the artists, stack 'em up, let them perform 20 minutes each as a fundraiser—we knew we didn't want that. We wanted to be more creative. That's when we started zeroing in on the swing states and started informally calling this the 'swing states tour.' We take a state and saturate it, each taking on a separate market on the same night.... Once we start doing the shows, the idea is to try and do them as close to the way we normally do them as possible. Bruce won't be doing three hours because he's sharing the stage, but believe me, this will be Bruce at his best. He is totally psyched."

Expect about an hour from R.E.M., and about 90 minutes from Springsteen and the E Street Band (who will also be backing Fogerty), with a shorter opening set from Bright Eyes. Of course, look for show reports following each concert on Backstreets.com and full tour coverage in the next issue of *Backstreets* magazine.



1888 - May 26, 2004

R.I.P. Palace Amusements

By Bob Crane

Sunrise was still fresh over the Jersey Shore when the giant claw ripped into the carousel house, shattering wood. Then a second rip, a third, and more shattering until 116 years of Palace history was gone in less than an hour.

A day earlier, the same weapon of destruction had been tearing at the most hated building in Asbury Park, the hideous unfinished high rise a few blocks north of the Stony Pony. That evening, preservationists had met and made progress in their fight to save the 1888 carousel house—so developers drove the claw over to the Palace before breakfast and smashed the Victorian pavilion to smithereens.

That's how the long-threatened demolition of the Palace—the place frequently used by Bruce Springsteen through the years as a photographic backdrop, the place referenced by Springsteen in "4th of July Asbury Park (Sandy)" and "Tunnel of Love" and mentioned by name in "Born to Run," the place featured in movie cameos and comic strips and twice on *The Sopranos*—got underway in the early morning hours of May 26, 2004.

Tillie gets a facelift.

VALERIE WAGNER PHOTO

Today, the Palace is gone. Gone are the sea-foam green walls that once encircled a palace of dreams, a place of exceptional amusements and pinball ways and a classic carousel. Gone are the majestic roof trusses and the remnants of the Asbury Park Rock 'n' Roll Museum. Yet all was not lost. The Palace in its final days yielded valuable artifacts—paintings, signs, neon blinkers, and classic wall murals, all now safely in storage.

Before the giant claw hit the Palace, volunteers from the nonprofit Save Tillie organization went inside to search for artifacts. As sunbeams poured through holes in the roof, illuminating brightly painted facades on the abandoned rides, the hunt yielded 125 significant items: ghost and spider murals from inside the Tunnel of Love; the Peter Max-like facade of the Twister; murals from the Fun House and the Orient Express; even the hands from the Fun House giant. Hundreds of coveted carousel rings were discovered under the decaying floor boards in the carousel house. A sheetrock wall in the remains of the Rock 'n' Roll Museum gave way to reveal a museum sign, lost in 1988. All were turned over to the Asbury Park Historical Society and the City of Asbury Park for storage.

Of course, removing signs and murals is simplicity itself compared to the challenge of remov-

See "TILLIE," page 49

FRANK SARAGNESE PHOTOS

IN ITS FINAL HOURS: The Palace interior retained grace notes of former glory, with majestic 116-year-old expanses in the Carousel House *(above left)* and brightly painted murals on the Fun House *(above right)*.

INTO THE TUNNEL OF LOVE *(right)*: Cuddling up was definitely in order entering the Tunnel of Love (its entrance pictured far left), for inside awaited a creepy spider, graveyard windows, and ghosts galore.

Mas Tequila!

A Double Shot of Pony Performances

By Bill Kenney

Joe Grushecky and the Houserockers were just the latest in a rash of "Friends of Bruce" to play the Stone Pony in recent months, but they were the first this summer to draw him out. On July 17, Soozie Tyrell (and other local artists) opened for Joe and his band, and the perpetual "guest appearance" buzz was thick in the air—especially after curious rumors that Springsteen had attended soundcheck with Sean Penn. By the end of the night, Springsteen, Tyrell, and Patti Scialfa would all be part of the houserocking for Bruce's first performance since April.

Tyrell moved nicely through an impressive hour-plus set, even strapping on a Rickenbacker for "Out on Bleecker St." and pulling out a Boss cover to close, "All or Nothin' At All."

A brief solo set by teenage Johnny Grushecky followed before Joe and the boys hit the stage and tore it up with typical fervor. Opening with a rousing "Long Way to Go," they mixed up the set with a variety of tracks from their catalog; particularly nice was "No Strings Attached," which shifted its already driving tempo up to a higher gear. Quite suddenly, however, the Bruce buzz—which heated up as Springsteen was spotted in the house with Penn—boiled over. A steadily rising "Blues Brothers"-style intro vamp was soon drowned out by calls of "Broooce!" as the man himself stepped onstage.

Mix Bruce and the Stone Pony, and you're typically bound for bar-band glory, but the screaming guitar he is free to play with the Houserockers adds another exciting dimension altogether. Bruce did not disappoint, although it took a couple of extra measures on "Never Be Enough Time" to get used to his borrowed guitar. Once settled, the Boss later called for "a couple shots" in the first of many onstage quips. Several shots of Tequila were delivered (with Bruce managing to get his down in two pulls). A riveting "Code of Silence" eventually led into a driving version of "Johnny 99," with Soozie and her fiddle on board. The Houserockers never let up, while Bruce infused both the band and the whole club with another level of energy.

After a rollicking "Pumping Iron," Bruce invited both Soozie and Patti up to sing. "Mustang Sally" was chosen after much debate (and another shot—this one Bruce got down in one throw). The song was a pretty funny mess, but the crowd was excited and participatory, so it all went down as fun.

Things rocked frenetically again with "Talking to the King" and "Down the Road Apiece," and the bliss was more music-oriented to the close. "Murder Incorporated" was a fitting final blast, as Bruce washed the house with feedback, ending with a run of intense solos and the pounding finish. The crowd roared and drank up the last moments, invigorated once again by rock 'n' roll and a little late night magic at the Stone Pony.

JOHN CAVANAUGH PHOTO

The Stone Pony
Asbury Park, NJ
July 17, 2004

with Joe Grushecky and the Houserockers
Never Be Enough Time • Homestead • Code of Silence • Johnny 99 • Pumping Iron • Mustang Sally/Walking the Dog • Talking to the King • Down the Road Apiece • **Encore:** Have a Good Time But Get Out Alive • Murder Incorporated

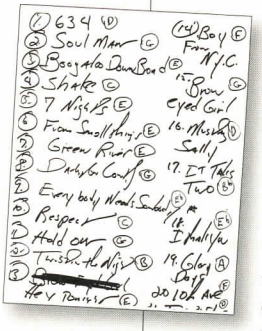
Boogaloo Down Ocean Ave.: Third Annual RCDS Benefit

By Glenn Radecki

"Oh my god, we have created a monster!" cried Bruce Springsteen as he brought a loud and raucous version of "Glory Days" to a crashing halt to end the main set of his performance on April 25. "There's no school tomorrow, right?"

It was a windy Sunday night in April for Springsteen's third annual "Stone Pony Bar Band Bash" to benefit the Rumson Country Day School. As in previous years, admission was limited to parents of RCDS students and their teachers, for a reported $1,000 per couple.

Joining Bruce on the Pony stage were Patti Scialfa and a backing band headed by Bobby Bandiera and containing most of the Asbury Jukes. A three-hour set filled mostly with covers was similar to the performance of years past, yet included some new additions and twists on the event.



With few performances since last December's shows at Convention Hall in Asbury Park, Bruce seemed to be in fine spirits and good form at the Pony. The songs were loose and fun, especially in the encores, with Bruce and the band turning in fine performances of songs he has never done outside of these RCDS benefits.

The show notably included more Springsteen songs than in years past. A horn-highlighted "From Small Things (Big Things One Day Come)" appeared early in the show, proving to be a live favorite of Bruce's since the song's improbable resurrection last August prior to the release of *The Essential Bruce Springsteen*. "Hungry Heart" was treated to a significant rearrange-

See "RCDS," page 50

RCDS Benefit
The Stone Pony
Asbury Park, NJ
April 25, 2004

634-5789 • Soul Man • Boogaloo Down Broadway • Shake • Tell Him • Seven Nights to Rock • From Small Things • Green River • Hungry Heart • Darlington County • Everybody Needs Somebody to Love • Respect • Hold on, I'm Coming • Twistin' the Night Away • Hey Tonight • You Really Got a Hold on Me • Mustang Sally • I Thank You • Glory Days • **Encore:** Tenth Avenue Freeze-out • Twist and Shout • Havin' a Party [with Southside Johnny] • Sweet Soul Music • Tequila/Sweet Soul Music [reprise]

School's Back In

New Tricks from Gary U.S. Bonds

By Lisa Iannucci

In the fast-paced world of the music business, fame (if it comes at all) is often fleeting, and for most, the glory days are never recaptured. Like many of his contemporaries, Gary U.S. Bonds, after peaking in the early '60s with such gems as "New Orleans" and "Quarter to Three," suffered a reversal of fortune in his career as times and tastes changed. This descent resulted in some lean years for Gary, both personally and professionally. Happily, Bonds' career has not only been resurrected, but thrives, thanks in no small part to a partnership with Bruce Springsteen that crested with the EMI releases *Dedication* and *On the Line* a little over 20 years ago.

Twenty years is a long time in between record releases—Bonds did not record or release any new material following 1984's *Standing in the Line of Fire,* produced by Little Steven—but in the intervening years, he has not been resting on his laurels. Gary has toured almost constantly in the U.S. and Europe. Along the way he forged ties with a whole new crop of musicians, often appearing alongside Jersey Shore stalwarts Southside Johnny and Beaver Brown—and still, of course, made time to play "Quarter to Three" with Springsteen at Shea Stadium in 2003. And he never stopped writing songs. This year, Bonds is back again with the self-produced *Back in 20,* a blues-based rock album featuring guest shots by the likes of Dickey Betts and Phoebe Snow, as well as an appearance by his old friend from Freehold.

Bonds recently spoke with *Backstreets* from his Long Island, New York home.

Backstreets: First of all, for the younger Bruce fans out there, tell us a little about how your collaboration with Bruce came about.

Bonds: We got together on the *Dedication* album in the early '80s.

Bonds and Springsteen rendezvous at the Hope Concert, 4/29/03.

DEBRA L. ROTHENBERG PHOTO

We met in a club in Jersey, he and a couple of his friends came to see me in a little nightclub there, and we did some songs onstage. I didn't know who he was, friends introduced him to me, and I introduced him to the audience there in this little club, and they went absolutely wild, to my surprise *[laughs].* I had no idea who he was, but obviously they did! I don't remember how many songs we did together, but we had a great, great time. Afterwards, we had a couple of beers or so, you know, and I guess we liked each other right from the start. And from that, we went on and started doing some things, and thank God, it's been great.

***What was it like recording with the E Street Band on* Dedication?**

Well, the E Street Band, what a band, huh? It was great working with them—they kick. I mean, as you can see, each one of them can go off on their own and be just as popular and just as productive, but they're a great group.

"Jole Blon" is definitely a highlight of that record. Whose idea was it to include that song?

I believe it was Bruce's idea. He probably just heard it somewhere and said, "That sounds like something fun to do, something that Gary would enjoy doing," and I did.

Why is "Daddy's Come Home" a favorite of yours?

Yeah, that is a real favorite song of mine. Steven Van Zandt wrote that song. It's just a pretty song, and at the time, I considered myself coming back to rock 'n' roll—back where I belong.

It's really great to see your shows turn into such a family affair, with both your wife and daughter onstage. How did that come about?

I guess it is a family affair now—that's pretty cool, man, I really like that. I remember I needed another singer one time when I was just going onstage, and I think I hired a new musician that didn't sing a part. And so my daughter was there—she normally travels with me a lot anyway—and I said, "Wanna come up and just sing a couple of these songs?" She did, and it sounded great, it felt good. I looked over and I saw my support there, and she stayed in. After that, my wife had come off the road—she was working with a couple other groups—and so me and Li'l Mama (as I call my daughter) said, "Let's get Big Mama onstage too." Because everybody knows all the parts, and it's family.

So that stayed together, and that's really been great. I mean, just to be up there with two of my very best friends in life, singing along and having a great time... that's got to be the ultimate sweet thing in life.

***So, the title* Back in 20...**

Yeah, we hadn't had an album out for twenty years.

What's the reason for that?

Well, actually, I've been working on material all along. But you know, this is the first time that I did it without somebody else's money *[laughs]*... I was doing it for fun, and we had the time of our lives. We made it at our home studio, and you know, I didn't even realize I could do it! My daughter, of course [helped a lot in the studio], you know young minds think quicker. I'd tell her, "I'll be there, it's just going to take me a little longer." *[laughs]*

So what happened to get you back in touch with Bruce after 20 years? The last time I talked to you [in 2002] you hadn't heard from him in a while.

Well, we had to do a couple of benefit shows over in Jersey, including the Hope Concert [for Bobby Bandiera, Jr. in April 2003]. I was rehearsing my new song "Can't Teach an Old Dog New Tricks" with the band, and Bruce was there, and he came back and said, "Man, that's a great song, where'd that song come from?"

I told him I was just going to try it out at some shows and was probably going to put it on an album later, and he said, "I like that song."

So I said, "Well, don't like it *too* much—because I may call you on it." He said, "Okay, that'll be cool," and so that's what I did.

So how did you get involved in the Hope Concert?

Well, I have a bunch of friends over there in Jersey, and whenever there's anything that has to do with kids or one of the members of the [Jersey Shore musician] family, I'm there. We help each other out if we can.

So from there, did he come into the studio to work with you on "Can't Teach an Old Dog New Tricks"?

No, I recorded it out here [on Long Island], and I called him up and said, "I need you to give it a listen." And he said, "Well, I got some other things going"—you know, he was running around, too—"send it on over here." And nowadays you can do those things. You couldn't do that before, back in the day.

Well, that's definitely a different way of working for you. How did that feel?

That was pretty cool. I think we both understand what I need, and I totally understand what he wants. Over the last few albums, we kinda know what each other's desires are musically. So I know that if I send it to him, I don't have to say a word—he's gonna jump right into it. Which he did, and a couple hours later he sent it back and said, "I hope you like this." I said, "Yeah, that's great—you're the man!"

You've often said that you especially enjoy doing shows in New Jersey, and you've played the Stone Pony quite a few times in recent years. What is it about the Jersey Shore audiences?

Well, those are just crazy people. Wild people—they are into rock 'n' roll heavy. I guess because it's so close-knit over there on the Shore, it does kind of remind me of that Manhattan [scene], except there a lot of the people are tourists. There are not many tourists around the Stone Pony. Those people have been there for years, they're not going anywhere. They're pretty cool, they understand what's going on with their artists, right there. And those artists, they've taken me under their wing.

You've been in this business over 40 years. Are there nights when you say to yourself, "I'm too old for this!"

[Laughs] Sometimes I say that, but I don't really mean it. Because inside I'm glad to be there and able to do what I do. What better job in the world can you have?

Bonds will be on the road in the U.S. and Europe throughout this year. See www.garyusbonds.com for information and tour dates.

Gary U.S. Bonds: A Select Discography

"New Orleans" (Legrand-1960)
"Quarter to Three" (Legrand-1961)
"School is Out" (Legrand-1961)
"School is In" (Legrand-1961)
"Dear Lady Twist" (Legrand-1962)
"Twist, Twist Senora" (Legrand-1962)
"Seven Day Weekend" (Legrand-1962)

With these singles, Bonds scored these seven Top 40 hits in under two years—five of the seven went Top Ten. Frank Guida, owner of Legrand, wrote or co-wrote the majority of these early Bonds hits and was responsible for that raw and infectious production. Bonds (born Gary Anderson) also had a hand in songwriting and arranging; he and Guida, as well as Gene Barge (known as "Daddy G") collaborated on "Quarter to Three." Later a staple of Springsteen encores, that song went to number one.

Availability: If you're not up for searching for the original vinyl, Bonds' work from the '60s has been compiled on numerous CDs. A solid 1990 Rhino collection, *The Best of Gary U.S. Bonds,* is now out of print, but other available compilations should do the trick. *The Very Best of Gary U.S. Bonds: The Original Legrand Masters* (Legrand) collects all these early hits, as well as the 1962 single "Copy Cat" and the follow-up "Take Me Back to New Orleans."

For Bonds' early work in the album context, look for a disc from the UK label Ace, collecting his first two LPs, *Dance 'Til Quarter to Three* (1961) and *Twist Up Calypso* (1962), on one CD. This two-fer includes most, though not all, of his top 40 singles among its 24 tracks. For completists, *Take Me Back to New Orleans,* another Ace release, contains Bond's follow-up '60s work.

Dedication (EMI-1981) (Razor & Tie-1991)

The first collaboration with the E Street crew, *Dedication* features production by Springsteen, Van Zandt, and Garry Tallent, with performances by every member of the E Street Band as well the Miami Horns and other Jersey musicians. With a song from Van Zandt ("Daddy's Come Home") and three from Springsteen: "This Little Girl," "Your Love," and "Dedication." Plus songs by Bonds himself, Jackson Browne, Bob Dylan, Lennon & McCartney, and Bruce's rearrangement of Moon Mullican's "Jole Blon." A single for "This Little Girl"/"Way Back When" went to #11.

Availability: (see *On the Line*)

On the Line (EMI-1982) (Razor & Tie-1992)

Even more of a Springsteen-album-that-wasn't. The E Street/Jersey Shore crew returned again for this Springsteen/Van Zandt production, and this time Springsteen offered no fewer than seven compositions: "Hold On (to What You Got)," "Out of Work," "Club Soul City," "Love's on the Line," "Rendezvous," "Angelyne," and "All I Need." And there was still room for a pair of songs written by Bonds and his daughter, as well as Steve's "Last Time" to close out the album. Though your ears may tell you different, one E Streeter you won't find in the performer credits is Springsteen himself. While Bruce is credited with vocals and guitar on *Dedication,* Bonds suggests that Springsteen's label intervened on the follow-up: "'Angelyne' was originally recorded as a duet with Bruce until Columbia made him take it off. So Steven took Bruce's part." A single for "Out of Work"/"Bring Her Back" went to #21. "Love's on the Line" was later included on 1997's *One Step Up/Two Steps Back: The Songs of Bruce Springsteen.*

Availability: *Dedication* and *On the Line* were originally released by EMI, reissued on CD by Razor & Tie for their 10th anniversary. While the Razor & Tie editions are out of print, a new 2-CD set from Gott Discs in the U.K. offers both in one package.

Standing in the Line of Fire (Phoenix-1984)

With the American Men. Though the majority of the Bonds/E Street collaboration came over the course of a year between 1981 and 1982, Bonds and Little Steven had one more in them for this 1984 album. The pair co-wrote the album's title track and lead single, which Steve also produced, arranged, and played on. "Standing in the Line of Fire"/"Wild Nights" (Making Waves/EMI-1984) was released as a single, and a 12-inch added a third track, the non-LP "Dance to the Beat." Bonds also contributed background vocals to Little Steven's *Men Without Women* (1982) and *Voice of America* (1984).

Availability: Out of print, unreleased on CD.

The Best of Gary U.S. Bonds (EMI-1996)

A lopsided collection largely from the two EMI albums, with six songs from *On the Line* and two from *Dedication.* With those two albums now back in print, this *Best Of* CD is mainly worth tracking down for two live songs. "New Orleans" and "Quarter to Three" have Bonds revisiting his past on these rave-ups, easily bridging the 20-year gap that separate these two compositions from the rest of the set.

Availability: Out of print.

King Biscuit Flower Hour Presents: Gary U.S. Bonds (King Biscuit-2001)

Recorded at the Stone Pony in Asbury Park, NJ, on November 25, 2000. Heavy with *Dedication/On the Line* material, closing with "Quarter to Three," this live set showed that Gary's still got it.

Availability: Heading out of print, but still available.

Back in 20 (M.C. Records-2004)

Bonds' self-produced (second) comeback album features Springsteen on the opening "Can't Teach an Old Dog New Tricks." Southside Johnny joins in as well, on that song and two others. Big Mama and Li'l Mama make it a family affair.

Availability: Hot off the presses.

—Christopher Phillips

Bruce signing benefits Asbury merchants

Bookstore of Dreams

By John Schlicher

On the second floor of Asbury Park's Antic Hay Books—in a small room where you'll usually find bins of historic, antique newspapers for sale—some new headlines were being made. On this special afternoon, the bins in that upstairs room were moved aside, and the space became a reception area where the usually very reticent Bruce Springsteen held his first-ever public book signing. It was an opportunity for 201 lucky fans to meet the man right in the heart of Springsteen Country.

Officially, the meet-and-greet was a signing for *Songs*, Springsteen's collection of lyrics and photos. It was also a means to encourage visitors to the many businesses spearheading the economic comeback of a revitalized Asbury Park. To enter the contest, fans simply had to visit any of the 55 businesses that were members of the Asbury Park Merchants Guild during June 16-20 and fill out an entry form. Rules allowed one form per person per day at each business. 190 lucky winners were randomly chosen from the collected entries on June 21 to attend the book signing on Saturday, June 26. The last ten spots were filled on the day of the event, and one extra fan was chosen at the very last minute through a promotion with a local radio station that was broadcasting live across the street from the bookstore on Saturday.

"Come hither!"

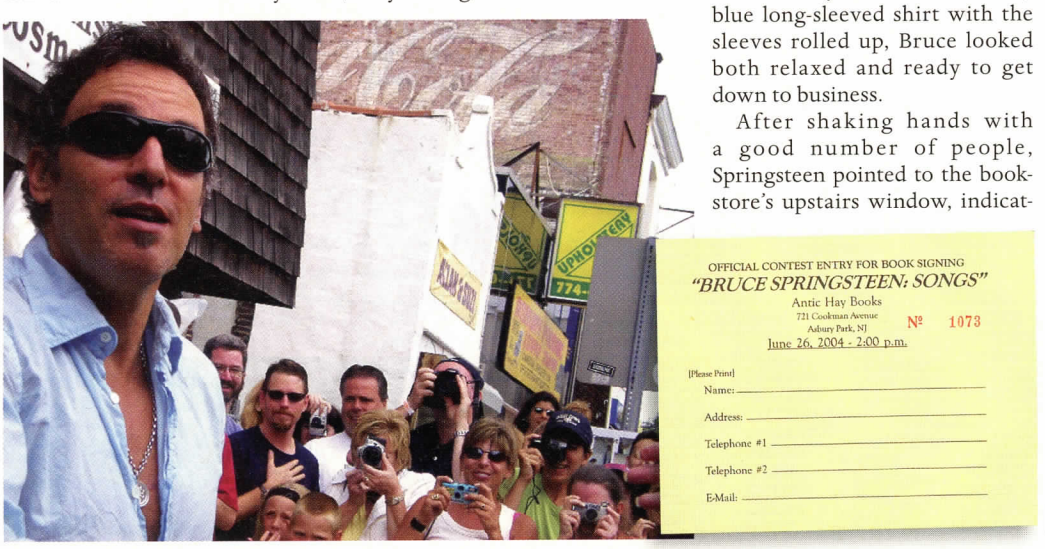
JOHN SCHLICHER PHOTO

According to one of the leaders of the Merchants Guild, the idea for the event was originally Springsteen's. Bruce had approached the Guild a few years ago, saying he would be interested in doing some form of "meet and greet" event as a way to encourage visitors to Asbury Park businesses. The idea was fleshed out in mid-2003, but with the *Rising* tour winding its way through U.S. stadiums at the time, the event was postponed until this year.

On the big day, the lucky 190, those vying for the last ten spots in line, and many curious passersby began gathering outside the bookstore around noon. At two o'clock, just as the first number was to be called, the man everyone came to see waltzed nonchalantly out the front door of the store to welcome the burgeoning crowd. Sporting sunglasses, blue jeans that were fraying at the bottom, boots that looked like they had logged a few thousand hard Harley miles, and a baby blue long-sleeved shirt with the sleeves rolled up, Bruce looked both relaxed and ready to get down to business.

After shaking hands with a good number of people, Springsteen pointed to the bookstore's upstairs window, indicating, "I'll see y'all up there." The crowd, which had been abuzz, was now electric. As each number was called out, individuals emerged from the crowd to check in and show their ID before entering the bookstore and waiting at the bottom of the stairs. Small groups were eventually allowed to climb the stairs and join the tail-end of a line that slowly made its way into the brightly lit room. The butterflies in the stomachs of nervous fans suddenly became 500-pound gorillas.

Fans entered the room and saw Springsteen standing much like a gracious groom on his wedding day, thanking every one of his guests for coming, pausing only to pose for a photo, do an occasional toast, or coddle and coo with a few babies in attendance. Unlike the common protocol at most book signings, Bruce did not sit behind a table (although there was one set up). He was on his feet, shaking hands, accepting hugs, getting kissed. He talked and listened, joked and empathized. He held an open communication with everyone in the room and yet made time, even if it was just a minute, to give each person their own, private moment. The man was working hard so as not to disappoint any-



MATT WOLF PHOTO

one. And I mean working—I was #16 in line, and he was already sweating. As my group entered the room, we were all so overwhelmed that none of us went up to him at first, prompting him to beckon and break the ice by proclaiming, "Come hither! Come hither!"

For every fan's Bruce encounter, there was a story. For a man named Tom Jones, Bruce signed, "That's not unusual!" Bruce personally took a few photos of himself and fans, holding the camera out at arm's length to capture the moment. He did a round of shots with a few lucky groups in honor of the man who gave him a bottle of whiskey as a gift. He even let some winners go back downstairs and bring up their kids to meet him. One fan asked Bruce to write, "Will you marry me?" so he could later present it to his girlfriend as his wedding proposal in the middle of Cookman Avenue.

Having met everyone in line, Bruce visited the remaining fans out in front of the bookstore again to thank everyone for coming. He stopped yet again to meet fans behind the building before hopping in his car and driving back home.

Needless to say, the event was a dream come true for many fans—as well as a booster shot of optimism for business owners in the area, who appreciate both Bruce's efforts and the many fans who follow his lead. Nearly 20,000 entry forms were submitted—that's nearly 20,000 visits to area merchants in a five-day period. "He's done more for us than the best advertising agency in New York could have ever done," said Joyce Stolaroff, the owner of Apart Contemporary Fine Art and Framing Gallery on Bangs Avenue. "We have one of the biggest stars in the world promoting our town whenever he can, and he does it for free, just because he cares. He's done so much for us."

The following day, the *Asbury Park Press* had a front-page article on the event. The headline, "An Early Christmas for Fans," captured the feeling of the shindig down on Cookman the day before—quite a memorable and historic day, for Bruce fans and for the Asbury Park business community, too.

So much so, in fact, that it wouldn't surprise me to one day find a copy of that Sunday's *Asbury Park Press* mixed in with those other noteworthy collectible newspapers upstairs at Antic Hay Books.

I'll stop by and look the next time I'm shopping in town.

John Schlicher lives in Allentown, PA—"a ways off," as Springsteen remarked at the signing—and he drove two hours to Asbury Park each day of the contest in order to enter. Schlicher's payoff, in addition to a photo with the man himself and a signed book: Springsteen told his girlfriend that he's "a nice guy." Not a bad reference at all.

JOHN CAVANAUGH PHOTO

ON LINE

Posted by DaBears97 on the BTX "Loose Ends" message board at Backstreets.com:

I am still pretty much walking on air after today's experience. There are really no words to describe the day, but I'll try.

I arrived at Asbury Park fairly early and wandered around some of the shops. It really is a beautiful town, once you look past the empty buildings. The first of many unbelievable things Bruce did was when he exited the front door of Antic Hay onto the sidewalk of Cookman Avenue and shook hands with the faithful waiting outside the barricades. Cameras were going off like crazy, and shouts of *"Bruuuuce!"* filled the air. Try as I did, I'm sure I took many pictures of the arms waving in front of me, but hopefully one or two will come out.

As my wife and I were both winners, we decided to have one book signed on the cover and the page with the lyrics to "If I Should Fall Behind" (our wedding song) signed in the other. The wait was excruciating, but there were so many great people there.

As I passed through the myriad of waiting rooms at Antic Hay I began to sweat with anticipation. Once I got up to the room Bruce was in, I couldn't believe it was about to happen. I was actually going to meet my all-time hero. Bruce's interaction with those in front of me was amazing. Woman were swooning, men were beaming. I have been to a lot of signings (including Patti's last week), and the signer is almost always behind a table. Not Bruce—he stood up against a wall and balanced the books in his arm, while he wrote whatever anyone wanted (at one point saying, "I don't know what it means, but I'll write it!").

Just watching him interact with the others was great. The girl in front of me told Bruce that her mother had done some charity work for him in the past, and he asked her all kinds of questions and then asked his assistant to go get the girl's mother. A cell phone rang to the tune of "New York, New York," which caused Bruce to break out some dance moves.

Finally, it was my turn. I told him that my wife was carrying the next generation of Springsteen fans, and I showed Bruce a baby-sized Springsteen t-shirt that I had already bought. He laughed and signed it "To Don or Donna... Bruce Springsteen." When my wife told him why he was signing the "If I Should Fall Behind" page, he told us he was touched and signed it "All My Love."

The whole moment was surreal, and I wish I could remember everything I said. I know that I didn't stutter, and my wife claims that I didn't say anything stupid. It was great to let him know how much he has meant to me, and he really seemed to care.

As Warren Zevon said on VH1, the best thing about Bruce is that he is every bit as great as you hoped he would be. Truer words have never been spoken.

PATTI SCIALFA

INCIIDENT ON 23IRD STREET

Patti Scialfa has always been a Jersey Girl, but lately she's been spending plenty of time 'cross the river on the New York side. That's where she lived in the '70s and early '80s, in Manhattan's Chelsea district, and her old neighborhood provided the setting for her new album, *23rd Street Lullaby*. In June, Scialfa spent the week of the record's release back in New York on a promotional blitz, leading a new band and singing her new songs for the most high-profile shows of her solo career so far. Between network TV appearances, Patti also made time to meet with and sign for fans around town—many of whom had been anxiously waiting over a decade for the sophomore follow-up to 1993's *Rumble Doll*. Readying to take Manhattan, Scialfa spoke with *Backstreets* about the scope of her career: as a solo artist, as a member of the E Street Band, and as a fledgling musician out on the streets of the city.

THE BACKSTREETS INTERVIEW

Well, first thing, I want to point out our interview with Emmylou Harris in the last issue of* Backstreets*—she had some really nice things to say about you. She described you as one of her favorite artists and one of her favorite songwriters.

Oh, that was so nice of her. She has been great, she's an angel. She means a lot to me. When you work in such a small arena—my own work—because you don't play live, you don't really get much feedback. She's always been very supportive, and it's meant a lot to me. It keeps you going, you know? It does.

***There's a world in which your career could have followed a very similar path as hers—you were both professional singers from an early age, you both have these beautiful, distinctive voices, great harmonies... but for such a long time she was primarily an interpreter, rather than a songwriter. And it's only been recently that she's really focused on songwriting, with* Red Dirt Girl *and* Stumble Into Grace.**

Oh, they're wonderful, aren't they? They're jewels. Her writing is so good!

And you've also been known mainly as a vocalist, but you've written everything you've put out yourself. So I'm wondering where you see the place of songwriting in your craft and your career—were you always as driven to write as to sing?

Yeah—I never really was an interpreter. You know, I went to music school in Miami for three years, then came up and finished at NYU. And when I came to the city, I put my own band together and starting playing my original music. So I always had material that I was trying to get out there. I'd sing at little clubs around town like Kenny's Castaways, a club uptown called Tracks that I used to play at a bit, Dr. Generosity's... all these places where you could play original music.

So you were writing that early.

Oh, yeah, I was 20, 22 doing that.

That was a couple of decades before* Rumble Doll*—was it frustrating at all to be a "professional singer" for so long before you could get your own songs out there?

Well, I did want to have a record contract and get records out earlier than I was able to. When I was 20 I was taking material around to different record companies, like Warner Brothers. I remember at the time [head of A&R] Mary Martin was there, and she gave me $3,000 from Warner Brothers to go and make a demo for them.

What year was that?

It's funny, I saw Mary recently, and we were talking about this—that had to be '73? '74, maybe? And even earlier than that, I had taken stuff around—Atlantic Records had given me money to make a demo, which I made with Anita Wexler, [Atlantic partner and Muscle Shoals producer] Jerry Wexler's daughter. So I was trying to get a record contract way back then—and I got very close, but I was never able to close the deal.

What got you into music in the first place? Was there a particular moment?

Well, my brother, who is about a year-and-a-half older than me, started getting into bands. And I'd always been singing, because I liked to sing—and my grandfather was a singer/songwriter, he played piano all the time. So I joined all the glee clubs in school, the choruses, and any play that was a musical that I could sing in.

When I was about 14, my brother had a band, and he brought home a white Strat. I'll never forget that. That was the most exotic thing I'd ever seen in my life. It looked like a spaceship. I was like, *whoa,* what is this? And I thought, oh, I love to sing, but there's another place to take this. You know, you're 14 and you're starting to think differently, and you can sing things that are relevant to you that are happening right now. So that's what gave me the idea to be in a band. So at 14 I went out—I went to go see bands and stuff, and when I'd see them play I'd ask them if they needed a singer. So I got into this band from Asbury called Ecstasy.

Is that what you'd consider your first band?

That was my first band, yeah, at 14, with Jerry Armstrong on guitar. I sang in that band for a while, and then when I didn't have a band, I would just go around and ask people if I could sing.

The University of Miami must have given you plenty of opportunity for that.

Yeah, the University of Miami is separate from the music school—there's a music school that has its own dean, a jazz school. Pat Metheny was there at the time; Michael Narada Walden was there, I was in a band with him down there; Steve Morse from the Dixie Dregs was there at the time; Jaco Pastorius would come down and sit in and teach. Bruce Hornsby went there. It was this really great, creative school—basically, you just studied music all day, and then at night at the clubs in Coconut Grove and Miami Beach, you'd work six nights a week. Before Miami Beach was done over, you know, those big, monster hotels in their faded glory. You could do real jazz gigs there—and get paid, which was nice. And we used to do that, sing all the standards six nights a week.

Then from there I transferred to NYU. I came and lived in New York, and I lived in New York for 15 years after I finished at NYU. And that's when I started putting my own bands together.

When did you meet Soozie [Tyrell]?

I was playing at this club uptown called Dr. Generosity's with Hiram Bullock, the guitar player, and with Cliff Carter, who plays on my record and who played many years with James Taylor.

He was in Miami with you, wasn't he?

He was—we were in a jazz trio down there together. So I had this little gig, and they'd come up and play my original music. And Soozie was in the audience. I was singing, and I was a little nervous, just this small little club with sawdust on the floor. She sat right up front, and she was just so lovely, and she just kept smiling, and I thought, "Oh this girl, I *love* her, she's so nice!" *[Laughs]* After I was done with my set I came over and sat down, and I said, "Gee, who are you?" And we just became friends. Two weeks after that we started playing together.

Was that busking? Or in clubs? Both?

We started just singing together in each others' apartments. Soozie came and learned a lot of my original songs, and we started busking—she said, "Let's play on the street!" And I had never done that. Basically, up until then I had only made music with men, I had never made music with other women. So that was my first time making music with a girlfriend, and it was so much fun, I said, "Yeah, let's try that, that sounds like a blast!" And then we got Lisa Lowell.

How did Lisa come into the picture?

Soozie and I started busking, just the two of us, and Lisa was in a really well-known street band at the time called the Bondinis. She came over and sang with us—it's easier for three people—and then we just worked on the street for quite a long time, supported ourselves that way.

And you took Soozie and Lisa over to sing with the Jukes, right? How did that come about?

I went to Asbury Park High School with Billy Rush [Jukes guitarist from 1975-1985]. He knew that I was in the city and that I was singing, and I think I had already toured with David Sancious at the time, with Tone. We played the club circuit, and Davey was always very supportive. In the middle of a Tone set, he'd say that now I was going to sing a song that I wrote, and I'd go, "Don't do that to me!" And he'd leave me, he'd walk off stage and have everybody walk off and leave me at the keyboard! *[laughs]* And make me sing one of my songs.

Billy knew that I'd sung on some of Michael Walden's stuff too, and on a Don Cherry record, so I was singing on

DEBRA L. ROTHENBERG PHOTOS

some records by that time. And Billy said, "Well, why don't you come sing on the Jukes record?" I said, "Can I bring Soozie and Lisa with me? It'll sound better, to have a nice trio..." And we all went in, and then they called us to do the tour—and we had never been on tour, so that was just fun.

So it was a good couple years that you were with the Jukes—'80 through '82?

Yeah—right at the beginning of the '80s, the *Sacrifice* tour. In the middle of that we'd come home—the tour bus would drop you off in New York, the bus would drop you right on your street. And then I'd have my own shows, I'd put my band together and go play at Tracks, in between working with them. Trying to get a deal.

And you had all those Sunday night jams at the Pony at that time, too.

Right! I'd go down on the weekend and jam—I'd come down and see my parents and my family, and then I'd go and Bobby [Bandiera] was down there, and sometimes the guys from the Jukes would stop in, and Bobby was kind enough to let me come up and sing a few songs with them every weekend. It was fun.

And I met Bruce down at the Stone Pony, sitting in with Bobby's band. That was at the Pony, probably 1981, and he came up and introduced himself to me.

What was that meeting like?

I was singing a couple of those "girl songs" with Bobby, like the Exciters tune, "Tell Him." And I came offstage, and I was talking to a friend of mine, and I saw a whole bunch of people walk up, and they kept, like—*why are all these people staring over my shoulder,* you know? So I was talking to my friend, and then I kind of turned my head, and Bruce was standing there behind me! *[laughs]* He introduced himself, he just said, "Gee, I like your voice, it's really nice," and we became... we just became casual friends. We'd go out for hamburgers sometimes after the night was over on the weekends, and he'd drive me home—I didn't have a car, because I lived in the city—he'd drop me off at my mom's house. We'd go to the Inkwell for a hamburger *[laughs]*.

So it sounds like you were really welcomed back to the Asbury scene, after Miami and New York.

Well, I was younger, so I'd never really been part of the scene—even when I was singing with the Jukes, I wasn't really going to Jersey that much. So it was nice when I *did* start coming back to New Jersey, yes, Bobby made me very welcome, and all those guys, Cats on a Smooth Surface, they made me really welcome. They said, "Come and sing, we'll learn some songs, come on down and sing." Bobby was good, he always threw me a few dollars just for even sitting in, because I was pretty broke at the time—so I could at least get a bus back to New York!

Obviously, New York figures in very prominently on your new record. Did you actually live on 23rd Street?

I did—I lived on 24th Street first, between 9th and 10th. Cliff Carter lived there—and like I said, I sang in music school with him, six nights a week. So he introduced me to Steve Jordan, who helped co-produce this record with me. We met in our early 20s, Steve and I—when we were 21 or 22. And whenever I'd be making demos, which I was always making, Steve would play, Cliff would play, they'd always help me out and support me. I got an apartment on that street because I knew musicians who lived there, and they were my dear friends, so it was just nice, and it was safe. And then I moved to 23rd Street later.

I was curious about how that Steve Jordan connection came about, because I knew he worked on the Keith Richards stuff that you sang on, and with Southside later...

The Keith Richards thing was funny. It was the *Born in the U.S.A.* tour, and a friend of mine called me. Toward the end of the *Born in the U.S.A.* tour we were basically commuting—we'd play Chicago and come home at night. So I'd be home and somebody would call me late at night and say "Gee, do you want to come down to a Stones session?" This was when they were cutting the *Dirty Work* record.

Which was before Keith's solo record* [Talk is Cheap *(1988), on which you also sang].

Right, before his solo record. And I said, "Well, if it's okay... I don't want to, you know..." Because it wasn't anybody in the Rolling Stones who had called. And they said, "No, no, it's all right." So I came down and Keith was there, and Ronnie [Wood]. And Steve Jordan was there—he was playing some drums and hanging out, just making music. And then they asked me to sing, and we just got along. So then for a couple weeks, every time after I'd get home from a gig with Bruce on the *Born in the U.S.A.* tour, I'd take a shower and then run down to the studio to their gig and sing with them *[laughs]*—we had fun.

What was it like working with Mick and Keith?

I worked mostly with Keith at that point, because Mick wasn't there, and then one day, at three or three-thirty in the morning, I get a knock at my door on 23rd Street, and it's Alan, Keith's guitar tech. I was on the phone, yakking to a girlfriend or something, and he goes, "We've been trying to call you for hours!" Now, it's three in the morning, and he's banging on my door. He says, "Mick is in the studio, and he'd heard that you've been singing on this stuff, and he likes your voice, and he wants you to come down and sing a duet with him."

So I literally had no clean clothes—you know, you've just come off the road, and it's *three in the morning,* and we've already done a big gig in, like, *Detroit* or something.... But I went down to the studio, and I remember I was very intimidated because I'd never met him. So we worked on this duet, but I was not singing that well at the time, and he was making jokes... it didn't quite work out, but he was really, really nice. And I ended up singing a lot on the record, which was great.

The duet didn't get used?

The duet didn't get used, no, but he was a doll—they were really nice.

***As far as working with Steve Jordan on the new record, I know you co-produced this time around—how did that recording process differ from what you did with Mike Campbell on* Rumble Doll?**

Mike Campbell and I worked so closely together, it was basically the same process. Mike was fantastic. We worked alone in his garage at the time—we started that record, *Rumble Doll,* before he had really built his studio. And he was the engineer, too. We did it just the two of us. I liked working that way, because it felt very safe to me—you feel very vulnerable, you're coming in and making your first record. So that was a very intimate setting.

And with Steve, we did start out that way, but we just had more people involved. Right from the get-go we had an engineer—this material encompassed a lot more people in it, even lyrically. I was going for something a little bit different this time. With Steve, we started with the organic drums. As opposed to when I worked with Mike, where we basically started with the drum machine, and later overdubbed Jim Keltner. We never really cut with the drums, I don't think.

Is that difference simply because Steve's a drummer?

Right—he's co-producing, he plays great drums, so we're going to start with the drums. So when Steve came in he would make his own loops—if we wanted to use a loop, he would make his own organic loop. He'd play for a couple minutes and then take the best eight bars out of that and make a loop, and then play again on top of that. And then [guitarist] Marc Ribot, we started the record with him, and Marc would come in and we'd always get some really great ambient loops. He just makes these beautiful sounds that would capture the mood of the song—so we'd already have the mood and the rhythm intact. That was really, really helpful. And *then* we'd lay the guitars on. So the rhythm and the mood—even if the rhythm was this funky beat or something, we could get a dark mood on top of it. So it was very helpful before we put the rhythm guitars on.

I've yet to see the liner notes, so I don't know what the extent of Bruce's involvement was, but I hear he's in there.

Bruce played on a few things—he played the solo on "Love (Stand Up)" he played organ on "Rose"—he played the B3. Lots of people played along the way—Danny [Federici] played on it, and I adore Danny, but we didn't use the song he played on. Roy [Bittan] came in at one time, Stevie [Van Zandt] came in at one time—they were just songs that we didn't end up using.

More outtakes! There are songs from years ago that fans trade around, like "Atlas Shrugged," and "Burning Love."

Yeah, you know, I wanted to put "Atlas Shrugged" on my record, I like that song. I was going to use it as a B-side, but we never had time to record it.

NEAL PRESTON PHOTO

SOOZIE CAME AND LEARNED A LOT OF MY ORIGINAL SONGS, AND WE STARTED BUSKING—"LET'S PLAY ON THE STREET!"

Well, the obvious question is what took so long to make the record—but I would imagine that between motherhood, two big E Street Band tours, and all the rest of it, time pretty much flies.

Yeah, time does fly, it's frightening how fast it goes. I *was* trying to make another record—I did some stuff in California with... you know David & David? David Ricketts, he's married to my sister-in-law. We did some stuff together at a little studio set up in my house there, we did some recordings together, and they came out good. He was very good at getting the soulfulness. But then we went back east, and I was still recording, and then I made a full record, mixed it, and shelved it because I didn't like it. It just really didn't have a sound picture I liked. The story I felt was there, but the sound picture wasn't. It was a beautiful sound picture, but it just didn't sound like me.

Did you salvage any songs from that project?

"Young in the City."

I like that song—it has that classic "album closer" feel to it. I've been curious what came first on this record and what came last—I was going to ask if "Young in the City" came at the end, since it seems like such a natural closer, but that's something you saved and brought to the new record?

Yeah, I did. I had a bunch of material that was very close, but it wasn't quite how I wanted it to be. I hadn't really realized them enough yet. Steve was good, because he was a real stickler for "Let's start with a real rhythm section." Where I'd want more control than that, because it's so horrible when you have a new song and no one's heard it, and all those people are in the studio! *[laughs]* You're so exposed. But that was the right way to start. Because I'd always felt that the "bottoms" of my music were never quite right on the other recordings that I'd gotten, that the rhythmic bottoms weren't quite right. And this way I felt like we finally got the basic building blocks of it right. So I rerecorded a lot of stuff, like "Rose" I had, and "You Can't Go Back," and "Stumbling to Bethlehem," and a few of those—I had them, I just had to find a new way to record them.

"Rose" is autobiographical, isn't it?

Yes it is, completely. It was this great Italian family restaurant called R.J. Scotty's. You walked in, and it had this really great old bar—it was a neighborhood restaurant, so it had this old bar at the front, and the same people came in every night and sat on the exact same seat at that bar. One of those real neighborhood places. There was a jukebox, and in the back was this room with all these chalkboards on the wall, with all the Italian specials. Great food, great Italian food. I worked there for a little under a year.

JIMMY IENNER, JR. PHOTO

So Rose was...

So there was a woman, and her name is Rose. I was in my early 20s, and so were most of the women I was working with, all these young girls—people who want to be actresses, they want to do this, they want to do that, we were all working there. It was a great place. One of those places that was so full and so rich with stories and interactions. And Rose, she was the head waitress, the one who trained you. She was about 48, 49, and her husband was the main chef in the back. She was a lovely woman, and she had a great resilience, great tenderness coupled with a toughness. She took us all under her wing, helped us be able to do our job and still have fun, ways to get around... like we had whiskey behind the cappuccino machine. And the things that she says in the song she actually did say to me in real life, sitting at the bar. So she was just this salty character.

Did she ever hear the song?

Yes—because I played the song at Kenny's Castaways, and she came down—*years* ago, in a different version of it, she came down and heard me play and heard the song.

You also played that song at the holiday shows [in Asbury Park, 2000].

I did play it at the holiday shows, that's right, I'd forgotten that.

Does that help when you're working on a record and writing songs, to play them out live and get a reaction? You haven't had a chance to do that too much, but does it help?

Yeah, I haven't had that chance too often. But I'll tell you what, it did help. Because we played the song more with a boardwalk feel that night, not as rhythmic, and I remember Dave Marsh saying, "Hey, that's a pretty cool song." He said, "You know, you could put a little hip-hop beat behind that..." and that it could take a lot of different transformations, you could do it a lot of different ways. And I thought, gee, that's a great idea. So when I got together with Steve, we did first record it as kind of a boardwalk song, a nice, lazy, summer thing. But then we needed more uptempo stuff on the record, so we said let's try to put a nice crisp little beat behind here and move this thing along and get the *female* celebration end of it—women really *singing* and celebrating their own will. Their own willfulness.

It sounds like the rhythms were really on your mind a lot for this record.

Yeah, they were. They really were. Because that's a wide-open thing, and it's something that I'm very intrigued by but can't do all on my own. I can do a lot on my own, but I can't do that. And so to get those rhythms to serve the song, and to pick the songs up and give life to them, that was a big concern of mine. Because I'll write, and I'm writing by myself. You're just sitting in a room, playing guitar....

Are you making demos as you're writing?

Yeah, I have a little DAT recorder in my room. I'll sit and play guitar and write my song on a DAT machine.

Then do you bring that to Steve?

No, I never bring the DAT in, I'll just use

DEBRA L. ROTHENBERG PHOTO

that as a writing tool. I'll actually play the stuff for Steve. Some of it I had recorded already, and I could say, "Gee, I like this, but I don't like that, so what can we do to make it...." Or I'll go through drum loops, and I'll say, "This isn't exactly it, but something like this." And then he goes "Oh, I gotcha. Throw that away, I'm gonna make my own loop." And he'll make his own brilliant loop and then play on top of that.

You had written all the songs before going into the studio, right?

Yeah, I had them all written. I can't write in the studio. I can come up with ideas in the studio for another song, but I can't write in the studio.

I know "City Boys" is one that goes back a long way.

Oh, I know. I mean, I rewrote some of it. But that's an old one. I didn't put it on until right at the end—I handed in my record, and that wasn't on it, "23rd Street Lullaby" wasn't on it. So I handed in my record—and we were still on tour at the time, we had three months to go—and as I was listening to it back, I just thought, you know what, I know I handed this in and I mixed it, but it's really not done. I still had those question marks in my own mind. I felt like I didn't have a title song, I didn't have a song to open the record with. I felt that the closing of the record was right, I just didn't have a song that was a broad enough sweep and an overview of the story I was trying to tell. So I wrote "23rd Street Lullaby," and recorded that.

It does seem like an overture in a lot of ways. So that was one of the last things recorded for the record?

Definitely, it was the last thing.

It strikes me that this album has a pretty different feel to it than* Rumble Doll, *starting with that first track.* Rumble Doll *has a lot of that "girl group" feel to it, and the first thing I thought of when I put in* 23rd Street Lullaby *was Rickie Lee Jones.

It's funny, I go back even further than Rickie Lee—who I love, I think Rickie Lee is brilliant—but I go back to Laura Nyro. I like Rickie Lee Jones because she took Laura Nyro's stuff and kind of made it into a thing of her own. I love Rickie Lee, she's very inspirational, but when I was younger that Laura Nyro stuff just *slayed* me. She had that one record, *New York Tendaberry,* which was so beautiful, all about New York. It was quite beautiful with the way the piano worked with the voices, and the sha-las... I like that. That's why "23rd Street," to me, had a lot of her in there. "Young in the City" even, that was very much my version, trying to take that in my own direction.

And Lou Reed, funnily enough, some of this record made me think of him, too.

Oh, totally—the way I sing over the bass in "You Can't Go Back."

Exactly—that and the "Doo doo doo" singing girls in the background....

Right, right!

***He has that great* New York *concept album, too. Your press kit describes this record as a "musical memoir." And thematically, in a lot of ways, it seems like a prequel to* Rumble Doll.

Yeah, it could be. But even though some of the songs are from different points, different places in time, they were certainly all tweaked—it's the past, but through the prism of the present.

True, and there's a point you seem to make of having the whole thing framed from a current perspective. I like that couplet in "You Can't Go Back": "Would they recognize us now, would they wonder what we're doing here on this side of town." But even if it's all grounded in the present, the focus is still on looking back. Can you say why you were drawn to write about that period of your life rather than the next chapter or the current chapter? Or anything else, for that matter?

Well, I felt that I really hadn't established.... The singer-songwriter [genre], like my favorite music that I listened to when I was growing up, was very confessional. Very personal. That's always the music that I wanted to make. *Rumble Doll* was that way for me. And then I had this material, some of it was there, and some of it I had just written—"You Can't Go Back" was new, "Stumbling to Bethlehem," most of the stuff is actually new—and so I did have a specific idea in mind when I started putting the record together. That this could all tie in: about living in the city, and your past, and the way it almost substantiates your idea of your past.... Everyone wants to tell their story.

There are specific references on the record, I couldn't help but noticing, to the year 1988. Both in "Rose" and "You Can't Go Back."

Oh, God, really? I used it both times? See, look at that.

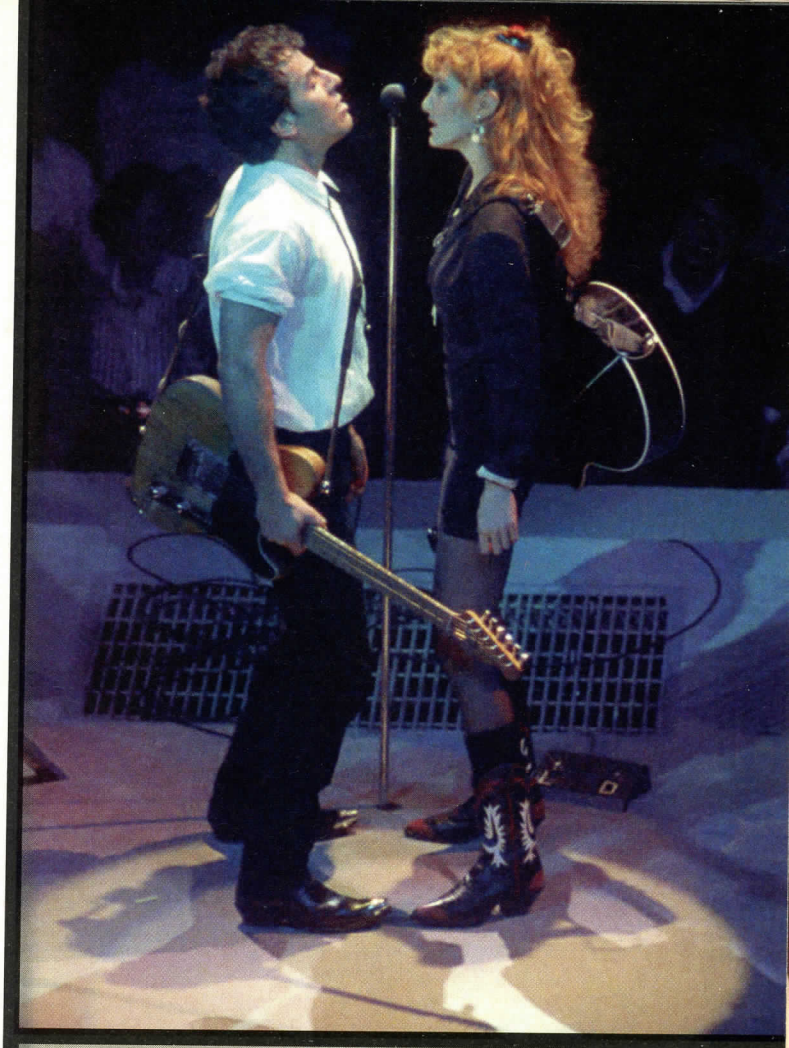
Yep, two different songs. So that year must stand out to you as a demarcation line.

No, you know what, "1988" just *sings* really well. *[laughs]* What I was talking about in "You Can't Go Back" was probably in the '70s, but it just didn't sound as good, you know? '88 just sounded so good. And then, right, "summer of '88" in "Rose"... that wasn't the right year, it just *sounded* right.

Come on... really?

It just sounded better. *[Sings:]* "Nineteen eighty-eight...." "Nineteen seventy-three...." *[laughs]* just doesn't quite make it.

That's funny—so that's not necessarily a that's-the-year-I-got-together-with-Bruce reference?



"1988" JUST SINGS REALLY WELL... THAT WASN'T THE RIGHT YEAR, IT JUST SOUNDED RIGHT.

YOUNG (AND LIVE!) IN THE CITY

The Today Show, June 15, 2004.

It's no secret that Patti Scialfa waited 11 years to follow up her excellent debut *Rumble Doll*. When it came time to release *23rd Street Lullaby*, she and the folks at Columbia Records strived to ensure that her sophomore record was not a secret to anybody.

First up, Scialfa gave a full performance a couple months in advance of the album's release, on April 18 at the Hit Factory, giving the first taste of both her new material and her new band. Fans were tapped to attend the showcase via an online trivia contest. (During the concert, Patti asked, "So how many of you knew the answer to those trivia questions? I didn't even know some of them myself!" In the crowd, about 60 hands went straight up into the air.) Winners were instructed to meet at a restaurant a few blocks from the Hit Factory on the day of the show, before being walked to the famous recording studio. As fans waited in line outside, Scialfa and her husband stepped out of the building, going to a mobile control room on West 54th Street to review video footage from that afternoon's soundcheck. When they returned to the Hit Factory, fans greeted them with applause and yells of "Patti!" Thankfully, there was not a single "Broooce!" to be heard.

Upstairs at the Hit Factory, Studio 6 was transformed into a cabaret theatre. Burgundy velvet curtains surrounded the stage, which featured two large projection screens with handwritten lyrics from *23rd Street Lullaby*. Shortly before taking the stage, the crowd of approximately 100 was addressed by George Travis as to the order for the evening's events. Fans were told that the performance was being filmed for an EPK (electronic press kit) and that from time to time songs may be repeated, if they needed to be re-shot.

Soon after, Patti and her band took the stage. Opening with the song "Spanish Dancer" from *Rumble Doll*, Scialfa at first appeared tremulous (understandably, considering this was her first full solo show since a one-off in 1993). But once she started singing, a remarkable assuredness took over as she and drummer/bandleader Steve Jordan led the crack band of musicians through 90 minutes of Scialfa's solo work. Despite interruptions from a stylist who fixed Patti's scarf offstage, the night was loose, casual and intimate.

Scialfa dedicated the beautiful song "Yesterday's Child" to the memory of Kristen Ann Carr, whose birthday was that day. Jane Scarpantoni's somber cello line, along with Soozie Tyrell's violin, underscored Scialfa's mournful vocal and lyric.

Also in Patti's band were fellow E Streeter Nils Lofgren (guitar, vocals, keyboards), Willie Weeks (bass), Mark Stewart (guitar), Cliff Carter (keyboards), and on backup vocals, Robin Clark and Lisa Fischer. Musically, the night was anchored by Jordan. Co-producer of *23rd Street Lullaby* and one of the finest session drummers in the music business, Jordan pounded away on songs like "23rd Street Lullaby" (which was indeed played twice for the cameras) and "City Boys."

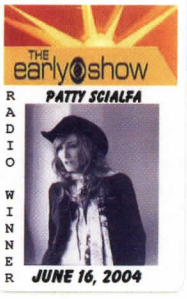
At the conclusion of "Each Other's Medicine" Dave Marsh shouted from the crowd, "That's my favorite song on the album!" causing Springsteen, standing right behind him, to double over with proud laughter.

Scialfa called up her husband towards the end of the set for "As Long As I (Can Be With You)," one of the few cuts she played from *Rumble Doll*, featuring Springsteen on 12-string electric guitar. Again, Springsteen received a polite ovation, but the night clearly belonged to Ms. Scialfa. Still, as is often the case, when Springsteen took the stage, the energy level in the room and on the stage was noticeably raised. Springsteen also played guitar and contributed vocals on a particularly rousing "Love (Stand Up)."

During the title song, "23rd Street Lullaby," Scialfa worked the stage like a singer who'd been fronting her own band for years. Watching this intimate performance on a beautiful spring night in New York City, the lyrics "Me and you on the avenue /on a summer night / bass and drums and the traffic hums... / and I feel all right" felt a whole lot more than just all right.

Far more than just the 100 people in Studio 6 soon had the chance to feel it too. Scialfa celebrated the mid-June release of her album in style, with a full week of promotional gigs that aired nationwide. In the span of just four days, she and her band performed for *The Late Show with David Letterman, Today, The Early Show, Late Night with Conan O'Brien,* and *The View*, all filmed in New York. In between these network appearances, Scialfa also met hundreds of fans in the area, autographing *23rd Street Lullaby* at Tower Records in Manhattan, at Jack's Music Shoppe in Red Bank, NJ, and even at a special signing for *Backstreets* contest winners after the June 16 *Early Show* taping. While Springsteen was occasionally seen on the sidelines at Scialfa's performances, the April 18 Hit Factory showcase was the only show where he joined her onstage. That concert, the longest of the bunch by far, was edited for an 88-minute DirecTV/Music Choice special that aired throughout the month of July.

—*Bob Zimmerman*



The Early Show, June 16, 2004.

No, no—even though it *was*—no, it just sang well. "1978" was probably what I was singing in "You Can't Go Back" at first, but it just didn't sing as well. Just like in "City Boys"—"My auntie Mabel, 1953"—I just took that because that's the year I was born. So it's just a playful thing.

One thing I wanted to mention is that tomorrow is the 20th anniversary of* Born in the U.S.A. *Which means that later on this month is your 20-year anniversary with the band.

You know, somebody told me that today! Isn't that wild? It goes fast, doesn't it?.

What stands out in your mind? This time 20 years ago, that record came out, and I presume that you had no inkling that you were going to be joining that band.

No, I had no idea. Until three days before the first show, when Bruce called me and said, "Do you want to sing on this tour?" It was very quick.

So quick—what kind of history did you have with Bruce and the band prior to that, that would have led to it?

I do remember singing on one of his singles. Going into New York, maybe for a different mix of a single—they were thinking of adding vocals to it, and I sang with Richie "La Bamba" [Rosenberg] and with Patty Malone. But they didn't use it.

Then after that, when they were rehearsing up at Lititz, Nils joined the band, and he had mono. So he couldn't sing. And you know Stevie wasn't there that tour, so they had no one really to hold down those parts. So Bruce called me and said, "Why don't you come up and—I don't know, we've never had a woman on the road, but why don't you come up and just sing, I can't really promise you anything." I thought I was going to be there for just the afternoon, and I ended up staying there for three days—singing different things, it was very casual. And then he said, "Gee, I don't know what we're doing, to tell you the truth, but I'll let you know."

They called me about a week after that, three days before the tour started, and said, "You wanna come on the road?" So I had a lot of homework to do! *[Laughs]* That's what I remember! I remember being in St. Paul, our first show, getting there and they didn't even have a place for me to stand on the stage. It had been built! You know, all that stuff was done, and no place for me to stand. So they were building a riser, and trying to figure out where to put a riser three hours before the first show.

I've heard that you actually tried out for the E Street Band, prior to 1984.

Yeah, I had. And the funny thing is, once I was in the band, Roy asked me one time, "Did you ever audition for the band, years and years ago?" And I had forgotten! Because I was in the city a long time, I had done a million auditions—you're trying to make your way, and you're doing a ton of stuff, and I had literally forgotten. I said, "Oh my God, yes I had!" He remembered. I don't even remember what tour it was for, it must have been the... *Darkness?* What came after *Darkness?*

Darkness *was '78,* The River *was '80.*

All right, so it was for *The River* then. I came in and I sang a few songs.

How did that come about?

I remember coming down for Mike Appel, because I lived in the city, and I saw it in the *Village Voice*. You're cruising through the section of work, and you see this "audition for...," you know, and I said, "Oh, yeah." So I called up and asked if I could audition, and Mike Appel said, "Yeah, come up." I went to the office—I guess whatever Mike Appel's office was at the time—and I walked in...

You know, if that was Appel, this must have been earlier. If that was Mike...

It *was* Mike Appel.

***So that must have been 1974, maybe '75—it had to have been prior to* Darkness.**

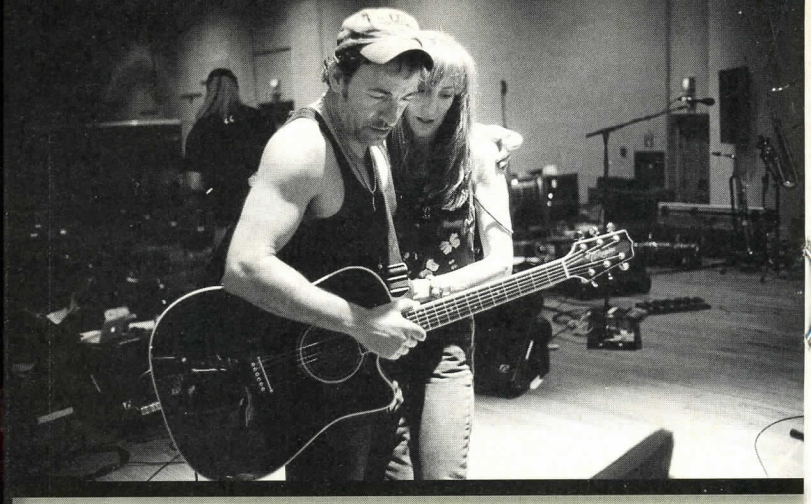
Oh, *right!* It *was* earlier, you're right. See, I don't even remember... *[laughs]* You're right, it was in the '70s. And they said, "Come and learn 'Da Doo Ron Ron.'" *[sings:] "Met him on a Sunday and my heart stood still..."* And I come in and and I say, "I'm here for the audition," and he goes "Okay, good." And he puts his feet up on the desk and sits back and says, "Okay—sing!"

Outside the Ed Sullivan Theatre, June 14, 2004.

DEBRA L. ROTHENBERG PHOTO

DEBRA L. ROTHENBERG PHOTO

JOHN CAVANAUGH PHOTO



I HAVE TO SAY, THE RISING TOUR WAS THE EASIEST TOUR WE DID... WE'D GET IN THE CAR AND DRIVE UP TO GIANTS STADIUM, JUST THE TWO OF US – IT WAS FUN.

DANNY CLINCH PHOTOS

And I go, "Well, where's the piano player, or the guitar player? Where's the accompaniment?" You know? Obviously I knew the band or Bruce wasn't there, but I thought they'd have *somebody*. But he goes, "Oh, no, you've just gotta sing!" *[laughs]* So I sang, and he goes, "Okay, okay, you can go down to Jersey and sing with the band."

So then I had a rehearsal down in Jersey, at this warehouse on Route 36, I think. And I sang, and Bruce said, "That's great—do you want to play me anything?" And I played him a couple songs I had written on the piano and sang. And he just said, "This is kind of a shot in the dark... we don't really know if we're really gonna take anybody on the road, we're just looking." And I don't think they did end up taking anybody on the road.

No, they didn't. And so when you met Bruce at the Pony in the early '80s, did he remember you from that?

No—because *I* hadn't even remembered that! I hadn't remembered that until Roy said something after I joined the band.

Well you must have made an impression on Roy, at least! And now you're bringing in E Streeters to play on your stuff. It was no surprise to see Soozie on the record.... but fun to see Nils there.

I was so glad Nils could play. Basically, we were making the record in Jersey, right? We have a house next to our property, actually my dad lives there—he has Alzheimer's, so he's there, and he has around-the-clock care—and we have a studio in the house. And that was really helpful, because it's close to home; you're on tour all the time, so I could come home and still be home with my kids. I could get my kids to school and then go to work, and it's all right there, so it's not like I'm gone all the time.

So as for Nils—I started with Steve and Marc Ribot. Do you know who Marc Ribot is?

I do, I'm a fan—mainly from the stuff he did with Tom Waits.

He's brilliant—he is so much fun to work with.

And he's a really distinctive player.

Completely. I've been lucky—in a way, I've been spoiled—because when I lived in New York, I played a lot with Hiram Bullock, and he's a very distinctive player, too—he has his own sound on guitar. A great musician. And when I worked with Mike Campbell, he's another person with his own voice. And then Marc Ribot... and Nils. So I would always ask Nils whenever he was staying in Jersey—like when we were doing the big gigs up at Giants Stadium, he was staying in town. And I would go, "Oh, I know you're really tired, but could you *please* come over and play? I swear it'll only be an hour!" *[laughs]*

So you were working on the record while the tour was going on?

Oh yeah!

That's interesting—when I talked to Nils, we talked about how the tours basically disrupted his recording process. He was working on* Breakaway Angel*, he did half of it, and then he gets the call from Bruce. He goes out and tours, and then a year-and-a-half later comes back and finishes the record.

Exactly, exactly.

But you were able to do it—I guess being that close to home for so many dates, it must have been easier.

It was. Steve [Jordan] would come down from the city, and Nils was right there. We tried to keep it as uncomplicated as we possibly could. Not really dragging people out of New York, which can become very expensive. Just trying to keep it contained.

How did having Soozie out with you on the* Rising *tour change things for you?

Oh, it was great, just great. Soozie and I have made so much music together, and we grew up in the city together, so being on the stage—on Bruce's stage—with her was so much fun. It was so lovely. I just thought she really added a lot to the tour, I loved hearing her violin. She's one of the great players. Besides having a gorgeous voice and writing great songs, she picks up her violin, and that's her voice, also. It's so individual, and it comes straight from her heart. It's always beautiful, it's never affected, it's just beautiful, raw, and real.

Does touring get harder or easier as time goes on? How much has motherhood affected that?

This tour was easy. I have to say, this was the easiest tour we did. You never balance it right—you just can't. You don't want people to think you can, just talking as a mother. You never can balance it right. But we've done a few tours, and the way we worked I felt that this tour was just really well balanced. We made sure that when we booked the tour, we had all the kids—*[laughs]* this is mom stuff—we had all the kids' stuff in consideration, like, okay, they have this here, let's be able to be home for this game, or this play, or this report that they're doing in school that the parents come in for... so it really worked out well.

And having those extended stands down the road at Giants Stadium must have helped.

That was the best. It was just like going to work every night, y'know? *[laughs]* It was great. We used to get in the car and just drive up, just the two of us—it was fun.

When you last talked to* Backstreets, *it was 1993; Bob Santelli interviewed you for us. At the time, you talked about some frustrations you had about being perceived as being in Bruce's shadow. As a kind of cross to bear, I'm sure that's something that'll never go away... but I wanted to ask about the positives—thinking less about public perceptions, and more just about your creative process. What's the most valuable thing he contributed to your work?

The most valuable thing was just the support. To keep going. Because I had recorded this material, and worked very hard, and at different times felt I just couldn't get it. And he would just say, "You're going to get it, just keep going. Some things are hard to get." And he would just be very supportive that way. So just that support, like, "There's nothing wrong with working really hard." And "Keep chasing it." That was really big.

Basically, what I had done in the studio with Steve, we had set up such a great working relationship that we really had it pretty well together. We were trying to come up with our own sound for the record and how we wanted the whole thing to be, and only we knew that, because we were in there every day. So anything that I brought home would be like, "Hey, we recorded this today, wanna hear something we're working on?"

I think it's a pretty rare and a pretty interesting dynamic to have two high-profile, creative artists as a couple...

[laughs] Well, that's nice of you to say!

Well, it's true, and it's always interesting to me—there's Amiee Mann and Michael Penn, Iris Dement and Greg Brown, Elvis Costello and Diana Krall, Lou Reed and Laurie Anderson, Johnny and June Carter Cash... and certainly more in the visual art world. It always makes me wonder what effect that has, and what role that partnership plays.

I think it has more to do with your personal life than it does with your own music. Because, just speaking for myself, writing is such an internal process—if you're not writing together, it's just completely internal. For me, I think it helps in the relationship because you just have a lot in common. Just having a lot in common for a long relationship, I think it's very important. We're around the same age, Bruce and I; we grew up ten miles from each other. And your love for music—I think you just basically understand each other and the way your emotions work. You understand that better. You can understand how much space a person may need, or how much closeness they may need. So the things that can be complicated... aren't. Because you're on that wavelength.

DEBRA L. ROTHENBERG PHOTO

Bruce joined you for that showcase back in April—which seems like it was just the first of a whole bunch of promo performances you're about to do.

Let me tell you something, that came out of the blue. If somebody had said to me, "Okay, here's what you have to do in one week: You have to put a band together, perform, we're gonna record it, then we're gonna do some interviews, and splice it together for an 88-minute thing," I would have said *"You're crazy!"* But what happened, it started out as just, "Oh, we'd like you to play three songs for Sony, and we might tape them or something, just get it on camera." And I said, "Okay, that's great."

So I was talking to Steve, and we decided as long as we're getting these great musicians together, it's a shame to just do three songs. If we're going to do three, we could certainly learn six, right? And then we thought, if we do bring these musicians together, let's do it at the Hit Factory, so we can just run it through the board. And it just kept growing and growing—they said, "Oh, jeez, you're doing six songs... can you do eight? Can you do ten?" And it just ending up to be this whole thing. I'm glad it took on a life of its own, because I would have been way too intimidated to bite off that much work!

And it wound up going well?

I'm pleased with it. The guys—and the women—played great. The studio, ultimately, is a very static environment, a very controlled environment. So to come out and play everything at once, and have people breathing all their life into the music, I was just really happy to hear it that way.

West Side Stories

Catch Patti Scialfa and her band live in support of 23rd Street Lullaby *this fall:*

9/15 Asbury Park, NJ / Paramount Theatre
9/17 Boston, MA / Paradise
9/19 Philadelphia, PA / Theatre of Living Arts
9/21 New York, NY / Bowery Ballroom
9/25 Los Angeles, CA / The Roxy

Additional TV appearances including The Ellen Degeneres Show *and* The Tonight Show with Jay Leno *are planned as part of her West Coast swing. Visit www.pattiscialfa.net for details.*

In the BLESSED

NAME OF ELVIS

"You could make an argument that one of the most socially conscious artists in the second half of this century was Elvis Presley, even if he probably didn't start out with any set of political ideas that he wanted to accomplish... I think that he was one of the people, in his own way, who led to the sixties and the Civil Rights movement. He began getting us 'all shook up,' this poor white kid from Mississippi who connected with black folks through their music, which he made his own and then gave to others."

—*Bruce Springsteen*, DoubleTake *Magazine, Spring 1998*

50 years ago this summer, Elvis Presley issued his first professional recording. With just Bill Black on bass, Scotty Moore and Elvis himself on guitars, "That's All Right" was recorded on the evening of July 5, 1954 in Memphis, Tennessee. Sun Records released it two weeks later on July 19 as a single (with "Blue Moon of Kentucky," recorded with the same trio on July 6, as the B-side).

Two months earlier, the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision had begun to overturn legal racial segregation in the country's public schools. Elvis' first officially released recording immediately blurred the "separate but equal" boundaries between "black" and "white" music by consciously combining the elements of country, the blues, gospel, and R&B in a new and exciting way. Although it was only regionally successful, "That's All Right" nevertheless jump-started the rock-and-roll revolution led by Elvis and his "commandants... Chuck Berry, Buddy Holly, Little Richard, Bo Diddley, Gene Vincent" as poet/musician John Trudell lists them in "Baby Boom Ché", his great song about the post-war rise and fall of "The King".

Elvis Presley was also the first musician ever to touch the life of Bruce Springsteen, and Presley's strong influence can continually be found throughout Springsteen's career, sometimes in very surprising ways. In this special section celebrating the 50th anniversary of Elvis' ascent, *Backstreets* is proud to present its first extensive survey of the connections between these two Rock and Roll Hall of Famers... from 5th of July, Memphis, to 4th of July, Asbury Park.

ILLUSTRATION BY SONIA TRIMBLE

The SECOND TIME

THE BOSS ALMOST MET THE KING

...and how Elvis Presley helped to bookend Bruce Springsteen's history with Mike Appel

By Shawn Poole

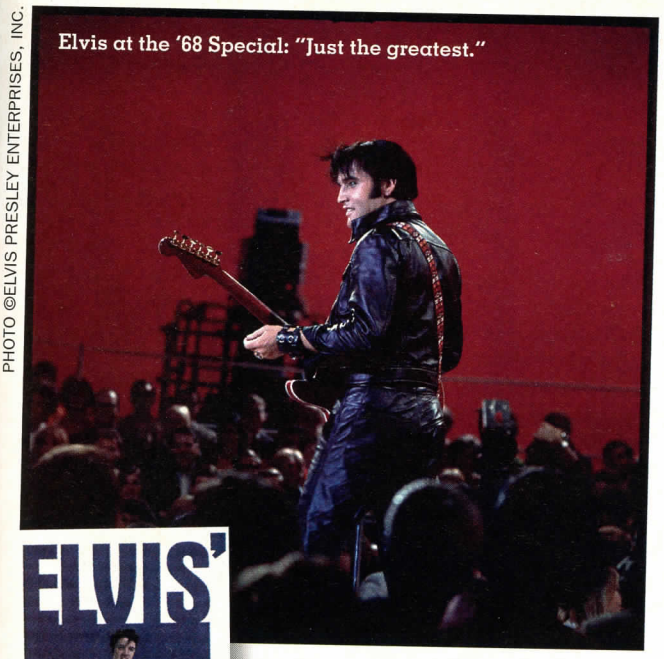
It was the second "meeting that never was," to use the words of the late, great Ed Sciaky, one of the few who saw the meeting almost happen. It would have occurred between a new rock star who was just beginning to take control of his future and the man who first inspired that young rocker to pick up a guitar. The new star would later achieve greater fame and influence than he already had. Sadly, the man who inspired him would soon become the casualty of personal and professional problems ignored for far too long.

Many fans have long been familiar with the famous story of young Bruce Springsteen climbing the wall at Graceland in 1976 to try to meet Elvis Presley in person [see our Ultimate Graceland Story, page 32]. Fewer, however, know that just over a year later, Springsteen also attended Elvis Presley's final Philadelphia concert at the Spectrum arena. By that time, Bruce was not only nationally known for *Born to Run* but was immensely popular in Philadelphia in particular. His rising superstar status even earned "The Boss" an invitation from local concert promoters to meet "The King" backstage before the concert.

Sciaky, a Philadelphia radio personality and longtime Springsteen supporter and friend who passed away earlier this year, attended Elvis' concert with Bruce. In one of his last interviews, Sciaky recalled how shocked he was when Bruce turned down the invitation to meet Presley. "I don't believe this," he remembered thinking to himself. "Elvis was his idol." In a 1978 radio interview with Sciaky, Springsteen gave some insight as to why he declined: "I never liked, you know, going backstage and stuff. I just feel uncomfortable when that happens—I don't know why." Perhaps Bruce also instinctively knew that meeting this Elvis, who was only months away from his tragic death, might be quite different from meeting the Elvis who had originally inspired him.

After Bruce and Ed sat through several opening acts featuring various members of Presley's backup band as well as a comedian, the King finally took the stage for the sold-out show to the familiar strains of "Also Sprach Zarathustra" and "See See Rider." As a veteran Elvis fan, Springsteen felt that night's performance was not one of Presley's greatest triumphs. "That wasn't a good night," he later told Sciaky. "I saw him at Madison Square Garden and he was really great... on the '68 ["comeback" television] special, he was just the greatest."

The date of the final Philadelphia Presley concert, Saturday, May 28, 1977 (which marked the unofficial beginning of summer on Memorial Day Weekend), holds additional historical significance for Springsteen fans. On that same day, just hours before Elvis' show began, Bruce signed all of the necessary paperwork to settle his now-famous lawsuit with his former manager, Mike Appel. Various books and articles over the years have simply listed the time that settlement was reached as "3 a.m. on May 28," but David McGee, whose 1977 coverage of the lawsuit for *Rolling Stone* seems to be the original source for this information, recently provided some additional details. According to McGee, the settlement agreement was indeed reached at 3 a.m. as originally reported, but Bruce didn't actually sign any formal settlement documents until later that day, sometime in the late-morning or early-afternoon hours, short-



Elvis at the '68 Special: "Just the greatest."

PHOTO ©ELVIS PRESLEY ENTERPRISES, INC.

sell back to Bruce), but Springsteen would no longer be restrained from working with his producer (and later producer/manager) of choice, Jon Landau; work on his fourth album could finally begin. Bruce would also assume total control over the production and publishing of all of his music. From then on, no decisions regarding Bruce Springsteen's career could ever again be made without his final approval.

To a certain extent, going to an Elvis Presley concert with a friend may have seemed the perfect way for Springsteen to celebrate his newly won artistic emancipation. At the same time, however, it must have been a bittersweet celebration. Despite his lengthy conflict with Mike Appel, Bruce has consistently maintained in various interviews through the years that their differences centered more on professional concerns than they ever did on personal issues. Appel was even a guest of honor at Springsteen's table when Bruce was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1999. That night, Bruce publicly referred to Mike as "my friend" in his speech.

In a significant coincidence, seeing Elvis in concert was also exactly what Bruce and Mike had done together at the very beginning of their partnership, presumably to help celebrate Bruce's major record deal. Just a few months after officially retaining Appel as his manager, Springsteen began his recording career with Columbia Records by signing with the label on June 9, 1972. On that same day, Elvis Presley began a series of four concerts at Madison Square Garden—the only New York City shows he ever performed.

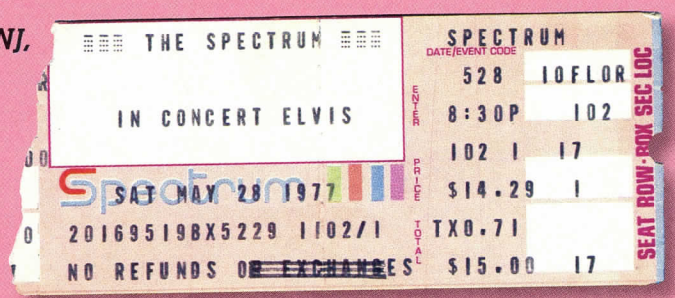
As noted earlier, Sciaky confirmed in a 1978 interview that Bruce saw Elvis perform at one of those Madison Square Garden shows. In an early-nineties interview with *Backstreets*, Mike Appel also recalled seeing that same Elvis concert with Springsteen: "That

ly before traveling to Philadelphia to see Elvis perform that evening.

By that time, the lawsuit had already delayed development of Bruce's career for over a year after the *Born to Run* tour ended. What Springsteen ultimately gained, however, would prove to be well worth the wait. The settlement formally severed all of his business ties to Mike Appel. Appel would retain a share of royalties from Bruce's first three albums (which he would later

"Back in 1977, I guess it was... I went down to Philadelphia and I saw Elvis. I believe it was the last tour that he ever did, and I remember I felt disappointed because he didn't play the old songs like I remembered them. It wasn't long after that when he died. I used to think back and try and understand what happened to him: why he ended up like he did, and how easy it is to get everything and to lose that thing inside you that keeps you alive. This is for Elvis, 'cause he deserved better than he got."

—Bruce Springsteen introducing "Bye Bye Johnny," East Rutherford, NJ, July 2, 1981



LIZ DOBBINS PHOTOS

At left: Elvis' last night in Philly, at the Spectrum on 5/28/77.

I FORGOT TO REMEMBER TO FORGET!

Elvis & Bruce Trivia

Put on your blue suede thinking caps....

1. There are only two singers—one female and one male—who have each made separate appearances on officially released recordings with both Elvis Presley and Bruce Springsteen. Can you name the singers and the recordings?

Note to Smarty-Pants: *Yes, it's technically true that everybody else who appeared with Elvis and Bruce on* The Last Temptation of Elvis *tribute album was on an officially released recording with both "The King" and "The Boss." For this question we're talking about people who have actually appeared on individual tracks (in either concert or studio recordings) with both Elvis and Bruce.*

2. There are only five musicians who have appeared on officially released recordings with both Elvis and Bruce. Can you name them?

Hint: *One of them is both a singer and a musician who is also the male answer to question one. The above "Note to Smarty-Pants" applies here, as well.*

3. Elvis never recorded "Fire," but so far Bruce Springsteen has performed on officially released recordings of six songs that were also recorded and officially released by Elvis during his lifetime. Can you name all six songs?

Hints: *Oddly enough, one of these songs has never actually been listed on any of Bruce's officially released recordings of it, though he clearly sings it. Also, on two of these recordings, Bruce only plays guitar; someone else sings lead.*

—Shawn Poole

Answers on page 37

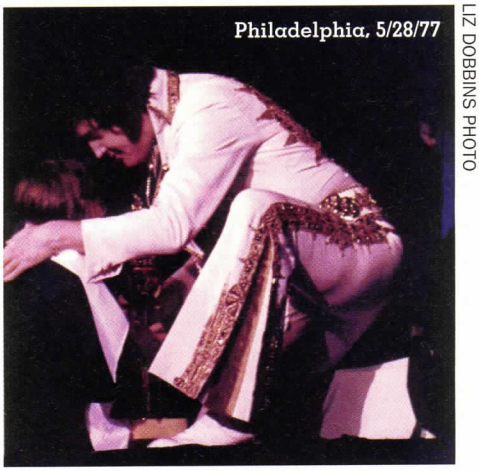
"In life it's important to have the right friends around—people that can tell you when you're screwing up. And I think Elvis couldn't have had many friends like that."

—Bruce Springsteen introducing "Bye Bye Johnny." East Rutherford, NJ, July 9, 1981

was one hell of a show. He had this comedian open up who was so bad. It clearly was this total set-up done by the Colonel [Tom Parker, Presley's longtime manager]. He was so bad that people were screaming for Elvis. Then when Elvis came out, every female had their Sylvania Blue Dot camera there... I've never been in a theatre before with that many bulbs going off at once... After the concert Bruce turned to me and said, 'The King.' That was it. That was all that needed to be said. 'The King.'"

By contrast, the 1977 Presley concert in Philly must have been a disapointment because his idol was visibly troubled by then, just ten weeks or so before his untimely death. The experience of personally seeing Elvis in such a state, and later learning just how little true support and friendship the King could find when he really needed it, apparently had a major impact. In Los Angeles more than four years later, while introducing the song "Bye Bye Johnny" at the now-legendary "Night for the Vietnam Veteran" benefit concert, Springsteen recalled both the first and last times he saw Elvis Presley perform: "There are certain things in your life that you sort of mark the years by, and I remember when I was nine years old, I was sittin' in front of the TV set and my mother had Ed Sullivan on... and on came Elvis.... I said, 'I wanna be just... like... that.' But I grew up and I didn't want to be just like that no more. Because he was like the biggest dreamer. He was like a big liberator. I remember I was sittin' at home when a friend of mine called and told me that he died, which wasn't that big a surprise at the time because I'd seen him a few months earlier in Philadelphia. I thought a lot about it—how somebody who could've had so much could in the end lose so bad and how dreams don't mean nothin' unless you're strong enough to fight for 'em and make 'em come true. You gotta hold onto yourself."

Fortunately, both for himself and his fans, Springsteen followed his own advice and avoided a similar fate. There is ultimately no more fitting ending to the Springsteen/Appel lawsuit drama than Bruce Springsteen watching Elvis Presley suffer the final stages of his horribly mismanaged career only hours after Bruce finally and officially resolved his own management issues. No image better represents what was really at stake in Springsteen's legal battle with Mike Appel. After all, as Bruce himself once told a group of journalists after the lawsuit was finally settled: "In a way, Mike was as naive as me. His idea was 'You be Elvis and I'll be the Colonel.' Except he wasn't the Colonel and I wasn't Elvis."



Philadelphia, 5/28/77

LIZ DOBBINS PHOTO

Where Can We Hear What Bruce (and Ed and Mike) Heard?

The only known recording of Elvis Presley's final Philadelphia concert is a low-quality audience recording of about two-thirds (45 minutes) of the show. It was first released in the 1980s as a bootleg LP on Starrecords called *Philadelphia '77*. It was later re-released as a bootleg CD under the same title, with no notable improvement in sound quality, on Spring Fever Records. The CD is padded with nine "bonus tracks" which are simply various officially released performances from other concerts. The packaging of both the CD and LP used no photos from the actual concert, either.

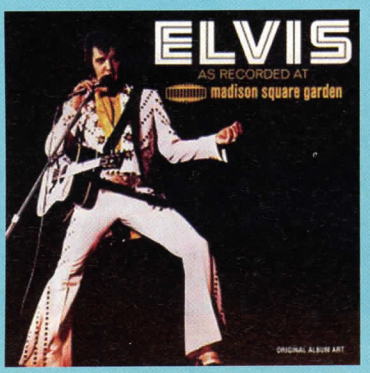
As the officially released five-disc *Walk a Mile in My Shoes* box set proved unequivocally, even in Elvis' final years when his health was at its worst, he could still produce great music. Near the very end, however, it increasingly became a matter of sheer luck and timing. From what can be heard on *Philadelphia '77*, it sounds like the audience lucked out and got a relatively good '70s-era Elvis show, despite what Bruce thought of the night. At least Presley was fairly coherent, in good humor, and in good voice. (His performance of "Hurt" was one highlight.) In hindsight, however, probably the most poignant moment of the evening came just before Elvis closed the show with "Can't Help Falling in Love". He told the crowd, of course, that they had been "a good audience... if you want us back, just ask for us and we'll come back..." He also assured the crowd that despite "what you read and what you hear... I'm in good health."

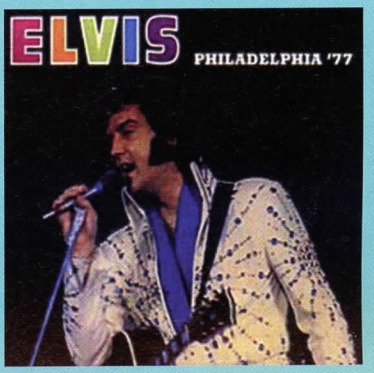
Although no soundboard recordings of the Philly '77 show seem to exist, the potential for an officially released recording of that show remains. The recent RCA/Follow That Dream release *Elvis: New Year's Eve* actually provided fans with a very well-mastered audience recording from a 1976 concert. It may be possible for RCA to produce a similar package from the Philadelphia '77 audience recordings that would interest fans of both Presley and Springsteen.

In the meantime, a much better-sounding (and more readily available) representation of the type of show that Bruce and Ed Sciaky saw that night is the official RCA/Follow That Dream release *Spring Tours '77*. While it contains no actual recordings from the Philly show, it features 23 professional soundboard recordings of good performances from the same period (engineered by Clair Brothers, the concert-sound firm that also worked extensively with Bruce over the years). It even includes photos of Elvis wearing the same "sundial" jumpsuit he wore on the night Springsteen and Sciaky saw him.

As for the show Springsteen saw in 1972, two of Presley's four New York City concerts were professionally recorded and officially released as *Elvis as Recorded at Madison Square Garden* and *An Afternoon in the Garden*.

—Shawn Poole



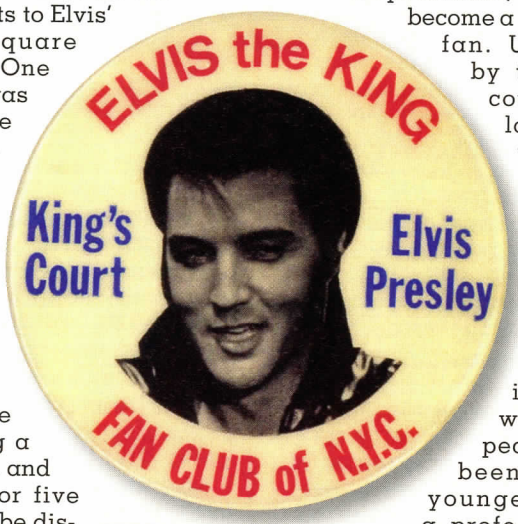


BEHIND the BUTTON

ELVIS PRESLEY'S "CAMEO" ON BORN TO RUN

As many observant fans have known for years, Clarence Clemons isn't the only "King of the World" to appear on the *Born to Run* album cover with Bruce. A close inspection reveals that Elvis Presley is also on the cover. Granted, he may not be as big as the Big Man—but then, who is?

Elvis' image is on the button placed on Bruce's guitar strap, a badge from the now-defunct New York-area Presley fan club called "The King's Court." The group was formed in 1972 by fans who met while waiting in line for the initial sale of tickets to Elvis' four Madison Square Garden concerts. One of the first in line was Staten Island native Al Hanson who, as an avid chess player, came up with the club's name. He also became its treasurer.



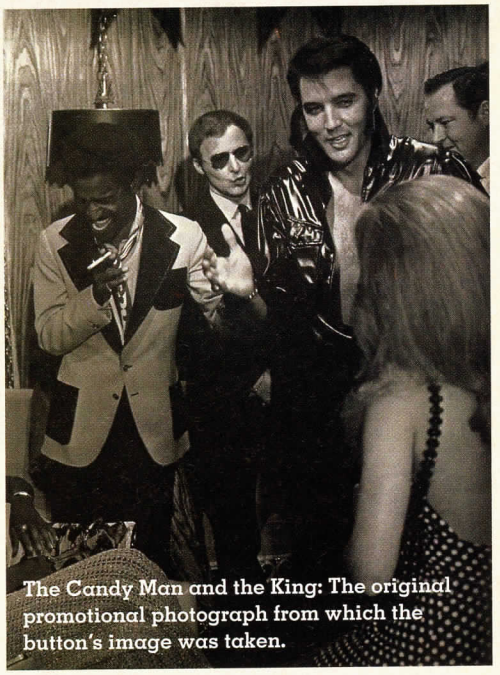
About eight months after the club was formed, Hanson led the group in designing a King's Court button and personally paid for five hundred buttons to be distributed to all who joined. "I was a young guy with some money to spend," he recalls with a laugh. Each member also received a black-and-white King's Court bumper sticker. As the club continued to grow, eventually thousands of buttons were printed and distributed. (Collectors take note: Hanson hand-stamped the phrase "100% Elvis" on the backs of the first 500.) Hanson estimates that the Court had almost three thousand members at the time of Elvis' death in 1977. The club folded shortly after Presley died.

In the year after the club's demise, Hanson also became a big Springsteen fan with the release of *Darkness on the Edge of Town*. He purchased a copy of *Born to Run* when he eventually started exploring Bruce's back catalog. Almost immediately, Hanson recognized the King's Court button on the album's cover. "The only way Bruce could have one of those buttons," he recalls thinking, "is if he was in our fan club or knew someone who was. We distributed those buttons to members only."

After discovering the King's Court button on *Born to Run*, Hanson telephoned Patricia Chmara, the Court's ex-president, who had also become a big Springsteen fan. Unfortunately, by that time she could no longer locate any written records confirming Bruce's membership. There was, however, one listing of King's Court members that included a "Pam" in New Jersey, who Chmara suspected might have been Springsteen's youngest sister, now a professional photographer. If Chmara was right, Pamela Springsteen would certainly have been one of the King's Court's youngest members, since she was only about ten years old when the club was formed. (Through her agent, Pamela Springsteen declined to comment.)

In any event, Al Hanson still considers himself one very lucky fan. In addition to helping to design a small but significant part of Bruce Springsteen's "wardrobe" for *Born to Run*, he is also one of the relative few who've gotten to see both Presley and Springsteen at Madison Square Garden. He offers a great analogy by way of comparison, too: "For me, seeing Elvis was like seeing God onstage, but seeing Bruce was like seeing your brother or your best friend."

The *BTR* button in its full-color glory: the cover of the King's Court fan magazine shows club members wearing the buttons when meeting their idol.



The Candy Man and the King: The original promotional photograph from which the button's image was taken.

IMAGES COURTESY OF AL HANSON

The image of Elvis on the button was cropped from a publicity photo taken backstage at Presley's Las Vegas concert stand in the summer of 1970. (That stand was filmed and later released theatrically as *Elvis: That's the Way It Is;* the film's 2001 "Special Edition" featured footage of the backstage meeting where the photo was taken.) The original photo was in black-and-white (as, of course, was the *Born to Run* cover), but the actual King's Court button featured a red-white-and-blue design.

Bruce sported his button in numerous photos taken by Eric Meola during the album cover sessions for *Born to Run*. In addition to what appeared on *Born to Run*, several more of Meola's photos eventually appeared on Springsteen's *Greatest Hits* and *Essential* albums. Probably the easiest place to most clearly see Springsteen wearing his Elvis button is on page 40 of Springsteen's *Songs* (in either the hardcover or paperback edition).

Al Hanson invites all fans interested in discussing Elvis, Bruce and/or "classic rock" in general to e-mail him at coolrockndaddy@aol.com. Don't even think about asking him for a King's Court button, though. He only has two left.

—Shawn Poole

Bruce's Golden Records

Springsteen recordings that reference Elvis

It almost goes without saying that you can find Elvis Presley's musical influence on many Bruce Springsteen records. From the ninth track of Springsteen's first album ("It's Hard to Be a Saint in the City") to the ninth track of his most recent album ("Further On (Up the Road)"), there are times when you can almost hear Bruce's lip curl as he summons the tough, bluesy phrasing that was one hallmark of Presley's style. And that doesn't even begin to address Elvis' influence on Springsteen's ballads and country/folk songs.

When it comes to more direct references to the King on Bruce's records, you'll find just a handful. Look for the ghost of Elvis most vividly in these recordings, both released and unreleased, listed roughly in chronological order.

BADLANDS

Bruce allegedly borrowed his "Poor man wanna be rich/Rich man wanna be king" couplet from "King of the Whole Wide World," which Elvis recorded for his film *Kid Galahad.* (In that song, the couplet finishes: "But the man who can sing when he hasn't got a thing/He's the king of the whole wide world.") An alternate version of Elvis singing "King of the Whole Wide World" was included on the tribute album *The Last Temptation of Elvis,* which also featured Bruce performing "Viva Las Vegas."

FOLLOW THAT DREAM

A studio version of Bruce's rewrite of the title song from Elvis' ninth film was recorded in 1983 and remains unreleased. Bruce first performed a version of this song in Paris during the *River* tour in 1981. Springsteen has continued to perform the song in various versions over the years. It was played as a "Memphis special" on the Reunion tour in 2000 (introduced as "one of my favorite Elvis songs"), and in Milan on the *Rising* tour in 2003 (an Italian Springsteen magazine published in the '80s and '90s took its name from this song). All of Bruce's versions, however, are much slower and more stately than the original 1962 Presley version, which almost seems a trifle in comparison. It seems as if Bruce wanted to emphasize how much this song's lyrics conveyed what Elvis meant to him and millions of other fans, especially since Springsteen's versions of the song first appeared after Presley's death. Bruce also wrote an additional verse for his version, featuring lines about everyone having the "right to fight for the things that come to them in dreams." In early live versions, Springsteen would also sometimes add several lines from Roy Orbison's "In Dreams" ("I walk in dreams, I talk in dreams...") at the end.

JOHNNY BYE BYE

During his 1981 tour of Europe, Bruce began performing this beautiful song about the death of Elvis. Back then it was called "Bye Bye Johnny" and it was based on an outtake from the *Darkness on the Edge of Town* sessions called "Let's Go Tonight." Both "Bye Bye Johnny" and "Johnny Bye Bye" included several lines from Chuck Berry's "Bye Bye Johnny," a 1960 "sequel" to "Johnny B. Goode." Therefore, the songwriting credits officially went to both Berry and Springsteen. "Johnny Bye Bye" was originally released in 1985 as the flip-side of Bruce's "I'm on Fire" single and was later reissued in a slightly different form in 1998 on the *Tracks* box set. Both released versions have lyrics and music that differ significantly from the one that Bruce originally performed onstage. All versions, however, end with the same crucial couplet: "Bye-bye, Johnny... Johnny, bye-bye/You didn't have to die, you didn't have to die." Bruce's handwritten "early song lineup" for the *Nebraska* album, reproduced on page 138 of his *Songs* book, reveals that an acoustic "Bye Bye Johnny" was once considered as the album's opening track.

PINK CADILLAC

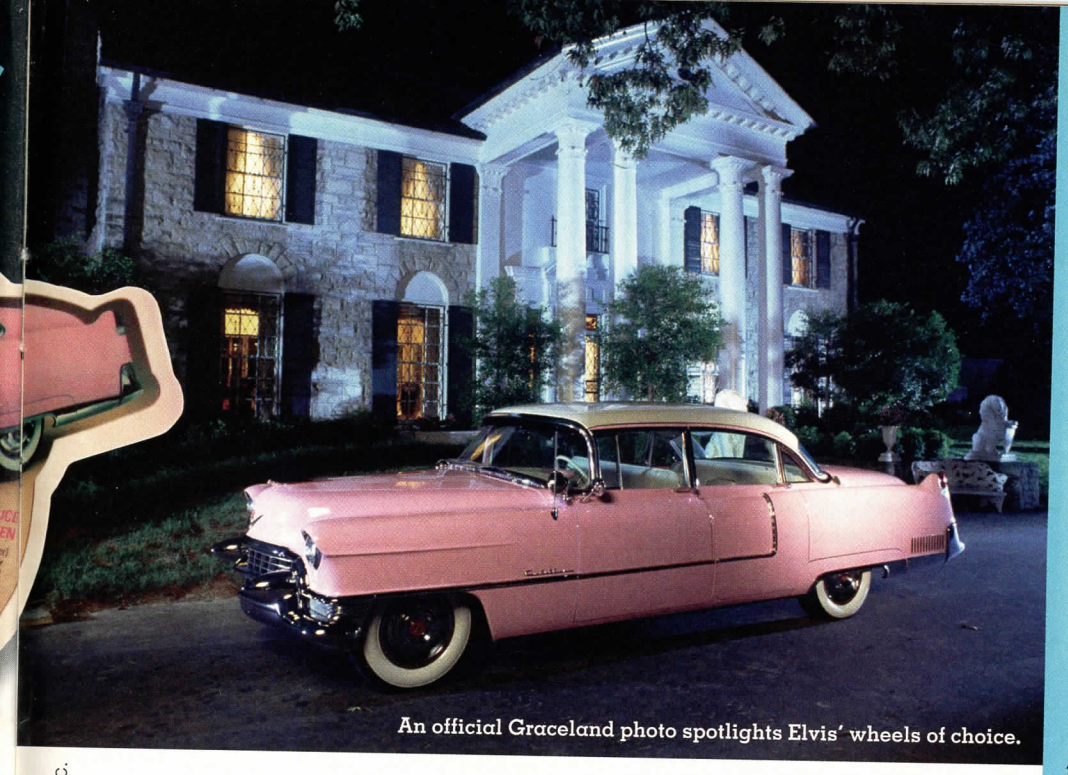
Recorded in 1983 and originally released as the flip-side of the "Dancing in the Dark" single. Elvis first summoned the enduring image/metaphor of the pink Caddy in his Sun Records classic "Baby, Let's Play House." It has since become inextricably linked with Presley, and his '55 model remains on display at Graceland's Automobile Museum. Like Presley's early recordings, Springsteen's "Pink Cadillac" was originally issued in monaural sound (or "mono," as Phil Spector might say). Despite being reissued in many contexts since, "Pink Cadillac" is one of the few Springsteen songs that have never been released in stereo.

WHEN YOU'RE ALONE

On stage during the *Born in the U.S.A.* tour, Springsteen occasionally retold the story of trying to meet Elvis at Graceland, concluding with a reflection on the tragedy of Presley's death. (A version of the story from that tour was actually transcribed and printed in Graceland's *Official Guidebook.)* The story often ended with Bruce noting, "When you're alone, you ain't nothin' but alone." That line soon became the chorus of this song from *Tunnel of Love.*

VIVA LAS VEGAS

Bruce first issued his version of Elvis' classic song in 1990. It was his first officially released recording using a band other than the E Street Band. The track featured backing by several notable musicians, including Ian McLagan on keyboards and the late Jeff Porcaro on drums, both of whom would also work with Bruce on *Human Touch* and *Lucky Town.* "Viva" was originally released as part of the benefit tribute album *The Last Temptation of Elvis* and was recently reissued on *The Essential Bruce Springsteen.*



An official Graceland photo spotlights Elvis' wheels of choice.

PHOTO ©ELVIS PRESLEY ENTERPRISES, INC.

57 CHANNELS (AND NOTHIN' ON)

Springsteen released this satiric meditation on isolation in the cable-television age (now a bit outdated in the era of two-hundred-plus channels) on his 1992 *Human Touch* album. Little Steven also created a series of CD-single remixes of the song that included commentary on the 1992 Los Angeles riots. Bruce first performed the song publicly in 1990 at the Christic Institute benefit concerts. In all versions, Springsteen ends the song by boasting of shooting out his television set "in the blessed name of Elvis," referring to the story of Presley firing a gun at a television set because he didn't like what was on.

I'M TURNING INTO ELVIS

Springsteen debuted portions of this humorous ditty at a 1995 E Street Band reunion concert. The concert was performed and professionally recorded at Sony Studios in New York City, a full version of which has circulated in collectors' circles. Portions of the show eventually appeared on the Disney Channel and PBS affiliates to accompany their airings of the *Blood Brothers* documentary. Unfortunately, "I'm Turning Into Elvis" never made the official cut, although it's been performed in concert by Springsteen several times since its debut. Bruce performed the complete seven-verse version of the song in, of all places, Carnegie Hall at the 1995 Benefit Concert for the Rainforest Foundation. It lovingly pokes fun at the King's predilection for beautiful women, bad movie roles, fast living, and fried peanut-butter-and-banana sandwiches.

THE PROMISE

This song was first recorded for *Darkness on the Edge of Town* and remained unreleased for more than two decades. It was re-recorded and finally released on *18 Tracks*, where Bruce sings, "I followed that dream just like those guys do way up on the screen..." presumably in reference to Elvis' song and film entitled "Follow That Dream."

"TENTH AVENUE FREEZE-OUT" (LIVE IN NEW YORK CITY)

The design for the *Live in New York City* CD incorporates star graphics that were originally used on a 1956 Elvis Presley concert poster (as revealed in the article on the making of the album cover in *Backstreets* #71). But there's a more direct reference captured on this live set. As seen on the *Live in New York City* DVD, Bruce catches a white shirt thrown onstage during "Tenth Avenue Freeze-out," mops his sweaty face with it, and throws it back into the audience just as Elvis used to throw his scarves during his '70s shows. He even attempts an Elvis stage move afterwards, and can be clearly heard on both the DVD and CD versions proclaiming, "Elvis is alive!"

Special mention: FIRE

No direct Elvis reference in this Springsteen composition itself, but its conspicuous Presley stylings inspired a legend that Bruce wrote the song specifically for Elvis—and even sent a demo to Graceland. While this legend (appearing in several books and magazine articles, including *Backstreets)* almost certainly overstates the case, and a search through Graceland's archives could not produce any evidence of a "Fire" demo ever being sent, the song made Springsteen think of Elvis, too. As he introduced it on tour in 1978: "I originally wrote this song when we first started the *Darkness* album, and I always wanted Elvis Presley to record it." While Elvis himself never got a chance, the song was covered first by Robert Gordon and then by the Pointer Sisters, who had a #2 hit with it. Even Robin Williams recorded the song—as Elmer Fudd. An official recording from Springsteen himself didn't come until *Live/1975-'85* in 1986 (and a studio version has never been released). The second single from the box set, "Fire" was Springsteen's first single since 1978 not to crack the Top 40.

—Shawn Poole

ONLY ONE KING
BRUCE ON ELVIS' LEGACY

"History was happening. And he was the figure that embodied that particular moment. People were doing it before Elvis, had some of the same clothes and the same influences, but he was the first guy that did it for the mass audience. He had the desire and courage, I think, to be willing to take that mantle on at that moment."

—Bruce Springsteen, Elvis Lives *(NBC, 11/29/02)*

"First of all, the most beautiful musician of all time. He really was a harbinger of wearing your sexuality, of not being ashamed, frightened of it; of *enjoying* it. There was a shocking manifestation of the feminine. The hair—the bouffant hair. The colors—what were the colors? *Pink*. It was a real outward signifying of a very sensual, feminine side of men. It exists, it's all right, it's to be celebrated.

—Bruce Springsteen, Elvis Lives

"He was the guy that did it on television for the first time. It was perfectly made for that little box, whether you cut out the bottom half or not. And he was able to use television to shock, to revolutionize. When he came out, this is a fellow who went for years seeing nothing positive about himself in the newspapers. I saw him on TV, my mother had the Ed Sullivan show on. It had enough of an impact to where I went out and got a guitar. The first thing I did was take it out of its case, hold it in front of me, stand in front of the mirror, and try to *move* like that."

—Bruce Springsteen, Elvis Lives

"People always say they were disappointed by Elvis, they were let down. I'm not sure that's the right way to look at it. I don't think anybody was disappointed by his great records, you know? I think personally it's a hard way to go for everybody out there, and that he gave the best that he had, the best that he could get ahold of."

—Bruce Springsteen, *Rolling Stone,* 12/6/84

"I could not *imagine* that guy dying. He was so incredibly important to me, to go on and do what I want to do. When I heard the news it was like somebody took a piece out of me.

"He was not primitive, like people think. He was an artist and he was into being an artist. Of course, he was also into rockin' his ass, but that was part of it. Onstage, he encompassed everything—he was laughing at the world, and he was laughing at himself, but at the same time, he was dead serious.

"To me, he was as big as the whole country itself, as big as the whole dream. He just embodied the essence of it, and he was in mortal combat with the thing. It was horrible and, at the same time, it was fantastic. Nothing will ever take the place of that guy. Like I used to say when I introduced one of his songs: 'There have been a lotta tough guys. There have been pretenders. There have been *con*-tenders. But there is only one King.'"

—Bruce Springsteen, *Rolling Stone,* 9/22/77

Is Elvis Home?

Springsteen Jumps the Wall

Backstreets Presents the Ultimate Graceland Story

On April 29, 1976, Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band had a Memphis, Tennessee stop on their "Chicken Scratch" tour. One of the highlights of the concert that night was the performance of "Knock on Wood" and "Raise Your Hand" with soul singer Eddie Floyd. But what truly marks that date in Springsteen history is what happened after the show. Late that night, along with Steve Van Zandt and publicist Glen Brunman, Bruce took a taxi to visit Graceland, Elvis Presley's home. His attempted meeting with the King has since become legendary among Springsteen fans, Presley fans, and rock fans in general, and it has even made its way into the *Official Visitor's Guide to Graceland*. Bruce has given numerous accounts over the years, both onstage and in interviews, ranging from hilarious to poignant. We've taken the liberty of combining Springsteen's retellings of the tale, as we present the Ultimate Graceland Story.

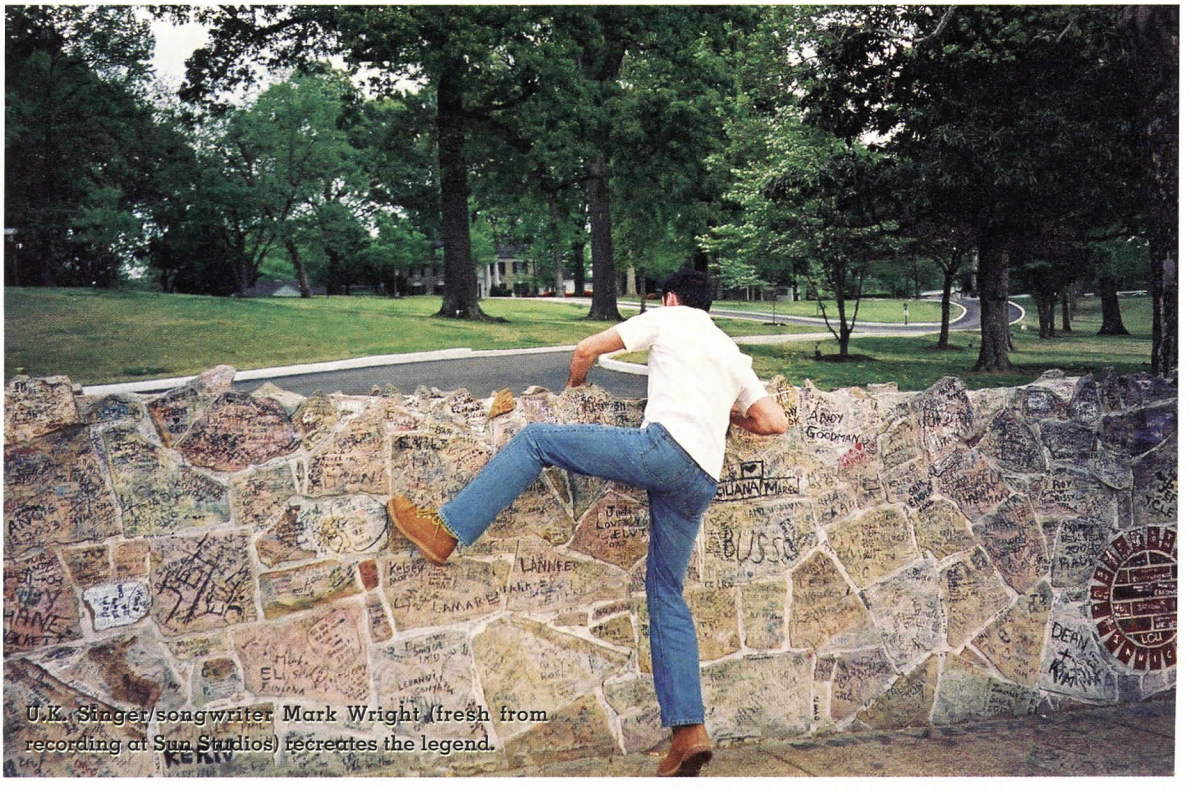
When we played Memphis, I guess I was about 26—it was 1976, on the *Born to Run* tour—we played this little auditorium down in the middle of the town. We went back to the hotel after the show. Me and my guitar player, Steve, were sitting around, and we were looking for something to do, and we called up a taxi. It was real late at night—it was three in the morning. We told the cab driver, "Listen, we wanna get something to eat." We said we wanted to eat someplace outside of town. "And this guy says," I know, I'll take you to Fridays." And we said, "We don't want, like, a hangout—we want a place where we can go and eat. Take us some place quiet." And he said "I know a place right out by Elvis' house...." So we said, "Wow, you know where Elvis lives?" He says, "Yeah, yeah." I said, "Take me to Elvis' house right now."

He said, "Are you guys celebrities?" Yeah, yeah, we're celebrities. He says, "Do you mind if I call the dispatcher and tell him where we're going?" Sure, sure. So he calls the guy, says, "Joe, Joe, I got some celebrities in my cab." And Joe says, "Yeah, who ya got there?" And he says "I got, I got..."—then he shoves the mic right in my face, because he doesn't know who we are. So I say, "Bruce Springsteen." They didn't know who I was, but they were *pretending* to, you know? And the cab driver says, "Yeah, I got them, and we're going out to Elvis'." The dispatcher says, "Damn." He thinks we're, like, going out to have coffee with Elvis or something.

So it was about 3:30 in the morning, and we pulled up in front of Graceland. I remember I got out and I stood in front of those gates that had the guitar players on them, and the gates were all locked up. But there was one little light on in the window. And I said, "Steve, I'll bet that's his bedroom. I'll bet you he's in there reading right now." I said, "I can't stand here—I gotta find out if he's home. Steve, I gotta do it."

So we had the taxi-cab driver with us saying, "No, don't climb over that wall, because they got big dogs over there, and they'll eat you up. You're gonna be in trouble." But I gotta find out. So I climbed up over the wall, and I jumped down on the other side. I was ready to be attacked, but nothin' happened.

I started up the driveway—it's a long walk 'cause the house is set way back. I started running up the driveway—and later on I thought that this was a stupid thing to do, because I hate it when people do it at my house. I can't say I like it when people come banging at my door at three-thirty in the morning... but I was filled with the enthusiasm of youth. And I was almost at the front door, just getting ready to knock, when I see this guy looking at me from the trees. And I figure I'm just going to go over and I'm going to say hello and tell this guy I just came to see Elvis.



U.K. singer/songwriter Mark Wright (fresh from recording at Sun Studios) recreates the legend.

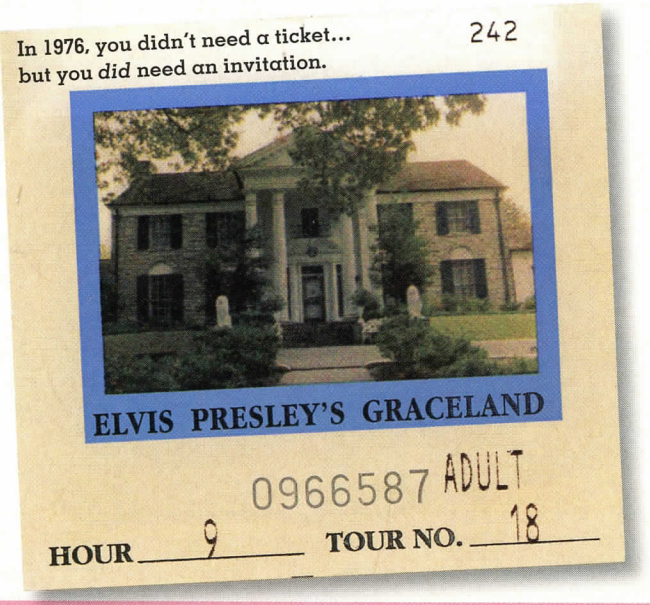
PHOTO COURTESY OF MARK WRIGHT

"What I wanted to do was like what Elvis did. He took on the whole thing at some point, he took on the whole country, but he also remained in Memphis. He was always Memphis. That's who I admired, and that's what I wanted to do: be about the whole country, but be about New Jersey, too. That's a story I'd like to tell if I can."

—Bruce Springsteen, *Asbury Park Press*, 11/27/96

So I walk over towards the woods, and out comes this security guy. And he says, "What are you doing?" I said, "Is Elvis home?" He said, "No, Elvis ain't home. Elvis is in Lake Tahoe.' And I said, "Are you sure?" And he said, "Yeah, yeah." So I said, "Oh. Well, can you tell him, uh, that I was here? Tell him Bruce Springsteen..." And he didn't know me from nobody, from Joe Schmo. I said, "I'm a guitar player, too, and I got my own band, and we played in town tonight, and I have some records that we made...."

Well, now I'm pulling out all the cheap shots I can think of—you know, I told him I had my picture on the cover of *Time* and *Newsweek*... Elvis is my hero, my inspiration... all the things I never say to anybody. Because I figure I've gotta get a message through. I pulled out all the stops trying to, but he looked at me like I was crazy. I don't think he believed me. And he said, "Oh yeah, sure, buddy. Why don't you let me walk you down to the gate. You gotta get out of here." He thought I was just another crazy fan—which I was. So he took me by the arm, these two guards walked me down. They were real nice, and they unlocked the front gate, and they put me back out on the street. I felt pretty good about it, even though I didn't get to see him.



Later on, I used to wonder what I would have said if I had knocked on the door and if Elvis had come to the door. I don't know what I was doing. Sometimes at night I look back, I think "Who was I expecting to meet?" I never got to meet him. I guess in a way it was better that it worked out like that. And the guard who stopped me at the door did me the biggest favor of my life. Because it really wasn't Elvis I was going to see, but it was like he came along and whispered some dream in everybody's ear and somehow we all dreamed it.

It wasn't too long after that that he died, and that summer I just started listening to all his old records again and a lot of the new things... And I used to think a lot, and I used to wonder how it was that somebody that seemed like such a big winner could lose so bad in the end. It was so hard to understand how somebody whose music came in and took away so many people's loneliness and gave so many people a reason and a sense of all the possibilities of living could have in the end died so tragically. And I guess when you're alone, you ain't nothin' but alone.

Compiled from Bruce Springsteen's retellings to Rolling Stone (1977 and 1987), to Ed Sciaky (1978), and various concert performances in 1981 and 1985.

Bruce & Elvis Trivia Answers

Questions on page 31

1. The male singer is "The Killer" himself, **Jerry Lee Lewis,** who performed with Elvis on *The Million Dollar Quartet* and with Bruce & The E Street Band on *The Concert for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame*. (Lewis also recently recorded a version of "Pink Cadillac" with Springsteen for The Killer's upcoming album *Old Glory.)*

The female singer is the equally legendary **Darlene Love,** who recorded "Sun City" with Bruce (and the rest of Artists United Against Apartheid). She also recorded several tracks with Elvis as part of the backup group The Blossoms. (The Blossoms also performed backing vocals on Elvis' 1968 comeback special.)

2. **The Killer,** of course, makes this list as well since he's also a master pianist. The four others are guitarist **James Burton,** pianist **Glen D. Hardin,** bassist **Jerry Scheff,** and drummer **Ronnie Tutt,** all of whom performed on numerous live and studio recordings with Elvis during the 1970s. They also performed with Bruce as part of Roy Orbison's all-star backup band on *A Black and White Night—Live.*

3. **"Mean Woman Blues"** Elvis' original version is from the *Loving You* soundtrack album. Bruce plays guitar on Roy Orbison's version on *A Black and White Night—Live.*

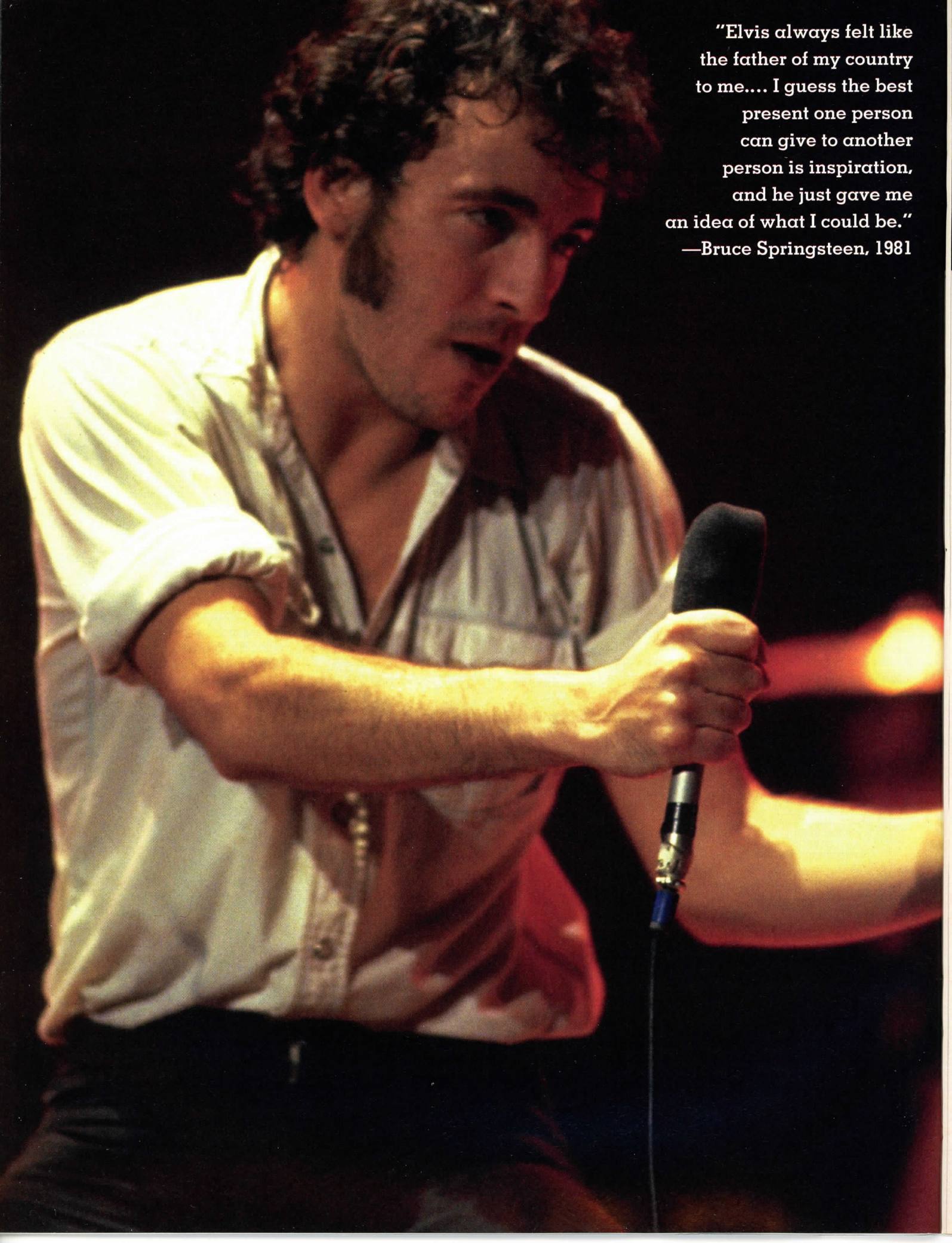
"Merry Christmas, Baby" Elvis first issued his version on *Elvis Sings The Wonderful World of Christmas*. Bruce's live version, based on Otis Redding's recording of the song, first appeared as the B-side of the "War" single.

"See See Rider" Elvis released several live versions of this song, the first appearing on his 1970 *On Stage* album. Bruce sings his version as part of the "Devil With a Blue Dress Medley" ["Detroit Medley"] on the *No Nukes* album. No version of this album, however, has ever listed "See See Rider" as being part of the medley, perhaps because the song is considered "traditional/public-domain" and not legally required to be credited. "See See Rider" also went uncredited on Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels' "Jenny Take a Ride," which Bruce combined with Ryder and the Wheels' "Detroit Medley" for his *No Nukes* performance.

"Shake, Rattle, and Roll" Elvis' version first appeared on his 1956 Elvis Presley EP. Bruce performed his version, based more on the original by Big Joe Turner than on Presley's version, on *The Concert for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.*

"Viva Las Vegas" Elvis' original version, of course, was the title track of his film's soundtrack album. Bruce first released his version on *The Last Temptation of Elvis* benefit/tribute album.

"Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On" Elvis released a studio version of this song on his *Elvis Country* album. He also later released two live versions. Bruce plays guitar on Jerry Lee Lewis' live version from *The Concert for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame* album.



"Elvis always felt like the father of my country to me.... I guess the best present one person can give to another person is inspiration, and he just gave me an idea of what I could be."
—Bruce Springsteen, 1981

FROM A BOSS TO A KING...

BRUCE COVERS ELVIS

Springsteen has long worn his love of Elvis on his sleeve—or, in the case of his "Viva Las Vegas" cape, on his back. From bar-band jams to the *Tunnel of Love* Express Tour, which saved a special place for Presley among its burning love songs, Springsteen has covered nearly two dozen EP hits in concert since the '70s. The list could easily grow if you add performances Bruce played backup on, or shared gray-area covers that we didn't consider to be "Elvis songs." Additional Presley hits have occasionally appeared in Springsteen's soundchecks, like "Don't Be Cruel" (September 21, 1978) and "All Shook Up" (April 5, 1988). But just considering the ones that Springsteen has performed before an audience, it's a mess of blues. Here's the big 20: You want them, you need them, you love them.

WEAR MY RING AROUND YOUR NECK

Bruce's first cover of an Elvis song debuted in Trenton, NJ on November 29, 1974 and was included in the set for most of the remaining shows on that tour (October '74-March '75).

Elvis' version was released as a single in April 1958 and went to #3 on the charts. First album appearance was on *50,000,000 Elvis Fans Cant Be Wrong/Elvis' Golden Records Vol 2* in December 1959. Most easily found on *Elvis: 2nd to None* CD (2003).

HEARTBREAK HOTEL

Live debut at New York University, December 2, 1977, guesting with Robert Gordon. First played with the E Street Band at the Roxy on July 7, 1978 (while Bruce's roadies re-tuned his guitar). Springsteen's first Elvis cover performed after Presley's death. In an interview published in *Backstreets* #77, Frank Stefanko mentions visiting the Record Plant during the *Darkness* sessions and Bruce playing "Heartbreak Hotel" for him on the piano, so this one was clearly on his mind at the time.

As Elvis' debut single for RCA, this was the record that changed the world. Released in January 1956, it stayed at #1 for seven weeks. First album release was *Elvis' Golden Records Vol 1* in March 1958. Most easily found on *Elvis: 30 #1 Hits* (2002).

BY PAUL TRIMBLE

GOOD ROCKIN' TONIGHT

Live debut at the Spectrum in Philadelphia, August 19, 1978. A regular in the set for a couple of months and occasionally in 1980.

Elvis' second single on the Memphis-based Sun label, released in October 1954. Elvis released five singles on Sun before signing with RCA in November 1955. The single didn't chart nationally, but it did very well on regional charts in the south. First album release was *A Date With Elvis* in July 1959. Most easily found on the new *Elvis at Sun* (2004).

READY TEDDY

Live debut as the opening song at Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto on November 16, 1978.

This could be considered a Little Richard cover, but significantly, Elvis performed the song on his first appearance on the Ed Sullivan show on September 9, 1956. Not released as a single, Elvis' version appeared on his second album, *Elvis*, in October 1956. Most easily found on *Elvis 56* (1996).

MYSTERY TRAIN

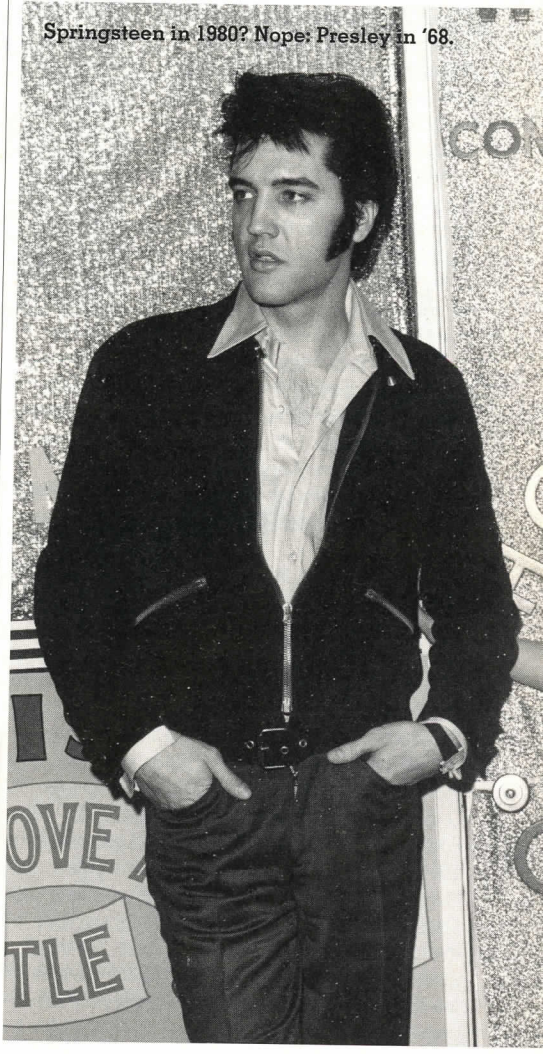
Live debut as part of the "Detroit Medley" at Madison Square Garden on November 28, 1980. Springsteen recently revisited the song on August 1, 2003 in Foxboro, MA, in tribute to the recently deceased Sam Phillips, founder of Sun Records.

One side of Elvis' fifth and final Sun single, released in August 1955. While "Mystery Train" is now regarded as a rock 'n' roll classic, it was the flip side, "I Forgot to Remember to Forget," which became Elvis' first #1, spending five weeks at the top of the Top Country Singles chart. First album release was on *For LP Fans Only* in February 1959. Most easily found on *Elvis at Sun* (2004).

CAN'T HELP FALLING IN LOVE

Often introduced as Bruce's favorite Elvis song. He talked about wanting to include it in the set during an interview with Philly DJ Ed Sciaky after the show on August 18, 1978, but the song didn't get its live debut until April 18, 1981 in Paris. It appeared frequently in the set on the *Tunnel of Love* Express Tour, and again in Las Vegas in 2000.

One of Elvis' best-known songs, "Can't Help Falling in Love" was recorded for the soundtrack of the film *Blue Hawaii*—Elvis' biggest-selling album



Springsteen in 1980? Nope: Presley in '68.

PHOTO ©ELVIS PRESLEY ENTERPRISES, INC.

LAWRENCE KIRSCH PHOTO

"When I was a kid, the first thing that seemed to make any impression on me, or meant anything to me, was when I heard the music of Elvis Presley. I guess the main thing it did it was just kind of set my mind free a little bit to dream about things, to think about the things that normally might not have come my way. I've been real lucky—I get to live a little bit of my dream every night. So here's hoping you get to live a little piece of yours."

—Bruce Springsteen introducing "Born to Run," Worcester, MA, September 4, 1984.

during his lifetime. Released in October 1961, the album immediately hit #1 and sold over two million copies in the first year (which may not seem impressive now, but in 1961 it was a significant milestone). The song was subsequently released as a single in November 1961 and reached #2. In the 1970's, as a salute to the audience, Elvis would sing "Can't Help Falling in Love" as the last song during almost all of his concert appearances. Most easily found on *Elvis: 30 #1 Hits* (2002).

FOLLOW THAT DREAM

Live debut in Paris on April 19, 1981. This could almost be considered a new song, as Bruce adds new lyrics and sings the song as a ballad instead of an uptempo number. He recorded the song during sessions for *Nebraska* and *Born in the U.S.A*, and while it remains unreleased, he continued to revisit the song in concert over the years.

The title song for Elvis' 1962 film, a very enjoyable comedy and the follow-up to *Blue Hawaii*. Featuring only five songs, compared to *Blue Hawaii*'s fourteen, the box office receipts were significantly lower—and, of course, the Colonel took note. Four of the five songs (including "Follow That Dream") were released as an EP in April 1962 and reached #15. Not available on an album until the release of the budget LP *C'mon Everybody* in July 1971. Most easily found on *Double Features: Flaming Star/Wild In The Country/Follow That Dream* (1995).

AIN'T THAT LOVING YOU BABY

Live debut at the Stone Pony on August 14, 1983, with Cats on a Smooth Surface.

Reference books generally claim that this is a cover of a Jimmy Reed song, but that's not the case—this is a completely different song. Originally recorded by an R&B singer called Eddie Riff in 1955, Elvis cut a version on June 10, 1958. This session was scheduled while Elvis was on leave from the army before being shipped overseas; the intention was to stockpile material for release while he was away, but this song remained in the vaults. By 1964, Elvis was firmly caught up in the "three movies a year with accompanying soundtrack album" routine, and regular recording sessions were a much lower priority. That September, needing a flip side for the "Ask Me" single, "Ain't That Loving You Baby" was dusted off and released. The single achieved the best chart placing of the six singles released that year, with "Ask Me" reaching #12 and "Ain't That Loving You Baby" hitting #16. Not released on an album until *Elvis Gold Records Vol. 4* in January 1968, the song then again appeared on a four-LP box set, *Worldwide 50 Gold Award Hits Vol. 1* in August 1970. It's one of Elvis' more obscure hits, and when Bruce performed the song it could still only be found on the single and these two albums. Even now it's not widely available—try for an *Elvis Gold Records Vol. 4* CD, or shoot for the top and get *The Complete '50s Masters* five-CD box set which, along with the single version, also contains a faster alternate recording.

BLUE SUEDE SHOES

Live debut at the Brighton Bar in Long Branch, NJ on August 19, 1983, with John Eddie.

It could be claimed that this is actually a Carl Perkins cover, but Bruce performs the song in a faster version closer to Elvis' recording. Released as the lead track on an EP in March 1956, "Blue Suede Shoes" hit #24 and also appeared on Elvis' first album, titled *Elvis Presley,* that same month. In August 1956, RCA released that album's 12 tracks as six separate singles, to make the tracks more accessible to kids who couldn't afford the LP; "Blue Suede Shoes" was released backed with "Tutti Frutti." Most easily found on *Elvis: 2nd to None* CD (2003).

LOVE ME TENDER

Live debut during the third show of the *Tunnel of Love* Express Tour in Worcester, MA, on February 29, 1988. Over the course of the tour it would be an occasional alternate for "Can't Help Falling in Love."

The title song to Elvis' very first film back in 1956. America's first introduction to the song was Elvis' performance on his first Ed Sullivan Show appearance on September 9, 1956. The single was pre-ordered in such quantities that, two weeks later, it shipped gold and shot straight to #1. In November the film opened in New York City, and 1,500 fans started lining up the night before. A week after the opening, RCA released an EP containing "Love Me Tender" and the three other songs from the film, which reached #35. First album release was on *Elvis' Golden Records Vol. 1* in March 1958. Most easily found on *Elvis: 30 #1 Hits* (2002).

LOVING YOU

On June 3, 1989 Bruce attended the wedding of a friend in Baltimore, MD; according to an article in the *Baltimore Sun,* he "broke into a spontaneous version of 'Lovin' You.'" There are no further details, but this must be...

"Loving You," the title song to Elvis' second film in 1957. "Loving You" was released as the flip side of the "Teddy Bear" single in June 1957 and made #28 ("Teddy Bear" went to #1on Pop, Country and Rhythm and Blues Charts). In July 1957 the soundtrack album was released, containing both songs, and hit #1. Most easily found on *Elvis: 2nd to None* (2003).

HOUND DOG

Live debut at the Stone Pony on June 24, 1989, with Bobby Bandiera.

"Hound Dog" backed with "Don't Be Cruel "was Elvis' biggest selling record of the '50s. Released in July 1956, "Hound Dog" made #2 in the charts (and then, before it had dropped out of the Top Ten, DJs flipped the single and "Don't Be Cruel" went to #1). He performed the song during his appearances on the *Milton Berle, Steve Allen* and *Ed Sullivan* shows during 1956 and early 1957. First album release was on *Elvis' Golden Records Vol. 1* in March 1958. Most easily found on *Elvis: 30 #1 Hits* (2002).

Bruce's performance of the song is taken at a much slower pace than Elvis' full-throttle original hit version, and its interesting to note that when Bruce saw Elvis at Madison Square Garden in 1972, Presley was starting "Hound Dog" off in a slow bluesy style for the first couple of verses before suddenly letting it rip. Is this where the inspiration came from? This version is available on either *Elvis: As Recorded at Madison Square Garden* (1972) or *Elvis: An Afternoon in the Garden* (1997).

LITTLE SISTER

Live debut at the T-Birds Café on July 15, 1989, with the X-Men.

Released in August 1961, "Little Sister" was the flip side of "(Marie's The Name) His Latest Flame." Both sides made the Top 10, with "His Latest Flame" hitting #4 while "Little Sister" made #5—ironically the strength of both sides prevented either from getting to #1. First album appearance was on *Elvis' Golden Records Vol. 3* in August 1963. Most easily found on *Elvis: 2nd to None* (2003).

VIVA LAS VEGAS

After performing the song at soundcheck on the *Tunnel of Love* tour (August 14, 1988 in Worcester), Springsteen recorded "Viva" the following year for the *Last Temptation of Elvis* tribute album. Live debut at the Count Basie Theatre on March 23, 1993. Definitive version was probably on May 27, 2000 at the MGM Grand Garden in Las Vegas, when Bruce came onstage at the start of the show wearing a shiny silver cape emblazoned with the words "Viva Las Vegas"; he proceeded to play the song as the opener—*and* closer. He reprised the Vegas performance of the song (sans cape) on the *Rising* tour in 2002.

Title song to one of Elvis' best films. Released as a single in April 1964, coupled with "What'd I Say," the song only manages to reach #29 on the charts but has since gone on to be regarded as an instantly recognizable classic. Not released on an album until the four-LP box set *Worldwide 50 Gold Award Hits Vol. 1* in August 1970. Most easily found on *Elvis: 2nd to None* (2003).

SUSPICIOUS MINDS

Live debut at The Playpen, Sayreville, NJ as part of a five-song jam on October 21, 1994, with Marshall Crenshaw, Greg Kihn, Elliott Murphy, and John Eddie and his band.

Released at the end of August 1969, just as Elvis was wrapping up his first triumphant Las Vegas engagement, "Suspicious Minds" justifiably became Elvis' 17th U.S. #1 Hit. First album release was the four-LP box set *Worldwide 50 Gold Award Hits Vol. 1* in August 1970. Most easily found on *Elvis: 30 #1 Hits* (2002).

BURNING LOVE
ITS NOW OR NEVER
JAILHOUSE ROCK

Live debut at the Concert for the Rainforest Foundation at Carnegie Hall on April 12, 1995. The second half of the concert was a "Tribute to Elvis" featuring Bruce, Elton John, Sting, James Taylor and others. Bruce sang lead on "Burning Love" and "It's Now or Never," with everyone participating in the finale of "Jailhouse Rock." "It's Now or Never" was actually performed as a duet of sorts with opera singer Jessye Norman, who performed "O Sole Mio," from which Presley's song took its melody, while Bruce segued into "It's Now or Never." (Also notable from this night were Springsteen's opening performances of "Viva Las Vegas" and his own "I'm Turning into Elvis.")

Released in August 1972, "Burning Love" hit #2 on the charts. Disgracefully it was used as the lead track on a budget album of his old film songs in November 1972, *Burning Love and Hits From His Movies Vol. 2*, the artist betrayed by his record company/manager for profit. Most easily found on *Elvis: 30 #1 Hits* (2002).

"Its Now or Never" was a worldwide smash hit on its release in July 1960 and reached #1 in most countries. It was the second single released after Elvis' return from army service in Germany and showed a broadening of style from straight rock 'n' roll. First album appearance was on *Elvis' Golden Records Vol. 3* in August 1963. Most easily found on *Elvis: 30 #1 Hits* (2002).

The title track to Elvis' third film, "Jailhouse Rock" was released in September 1957 and made #1 on Pop, Country, and R&B charts. First album release was on *Elvis' Golden Records Vol. 1* in March 1958. Most easily found on *Elvis: 30 #1 Hits* (2002).

Like an angel on my chest: Springsteen in 1973.

PHOTO FROM THE 1973 *NIAGARA*, COURTESY OF NIAGARA UNIVERSITY, NIAGARA, NY

GUITAR MAN

Live debut (partial) at the Pyramid Arena, Memphis on March 18, 2000, when some lines from the song were added to the beginning of "Working on the Highway." The opening lines of the song had been used during the band introductions to introduce Nils Lofgren during shows in 1999; Springsteen also played on this song at the 1995 Rainforest benefit, backing Sting on guitar.

A great uptempo country song released as a single in January 1968, when the seemingly endless stream of soundtracks had reduced Elvis' career to a joke. The song had first been released as a "bonus track" on the abysmal *Clambake* soundtrack album in October 1967. Most easily found on *Tomorrow is a Long Time* (1999).

BLUE CHRISTMAS

Live debut at Convention Hall in Asbury Park on December 17, 2000.

Released on *Elvis' Christmas Album* in October 1957 and simultaneously on an EP, *Elvis Sings Christmas Songs*. Each went to #1 on their respective charts. In November 1964 the song was given a belated single release, and it made #1 on a special chart of Christmas songs. The song was included in the two "sit down" shows filmed in June 1968 for the 1968 TV special, and Elvis included an extra verse not in his 1957 version. Interestingly, Bruce's performance includes this extra verse.

Special mention:

CLOSING VAMP

First played at the show in Worcester, MA on February 29 1988.

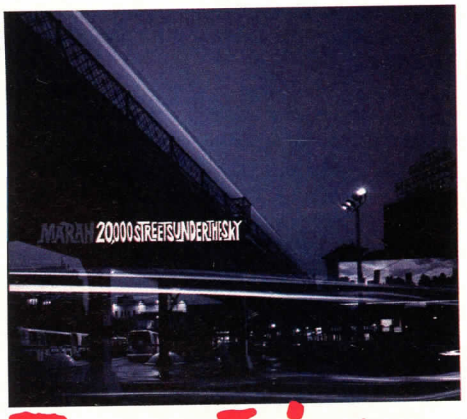
An uptempo instrumental piece by the band and horn section just after Bruce's cry of "I'm just a prisoner…" giving him a chance to acknowledge the crowd before taking his bows with the rest of the band. It became a regular part of the set, usually played before the final song of the show. This instrumental is almost identical to the riff played by the TCB band and orchestra while Elvis took his final bows and left the stage at the end of his '70s concerts. Check out either of the Madison Square Garden CDs or *Aloha From Hawaii* (1973).

Shawn Poole and Chris Phillips wish to thank Paul Trimble, Lauren Onkey, Lisa McMahon, Al Hanson, Liz Dobbins, Salvador Trepat, Todd Morgan at Graceland, and Elvis Presley Enterprises, Inc. for their assistance with this feature. Visit Presley's official website at www.elvis.com.

The View From

By Lisa Iannucci

It has been a turbulent couple of years for Philadelphia-based band Marah. After having written and recorded their first two records in their hometown, Dave and Serge Bielanko decided to switch gears a bit with their third release, *Float Away With the Friday Night Gods* (2002), working in London with Oasis guru Owen Morris. The resulting record failed to meet either their own or their fans' expectations, and in the confusing aftermath, their deal with Artemis was scrapped, leaving them to start from scratch.



They parted ways for a while in early 2003, with Dave in Brooklyn, NY, and Serge spending time in London. An ocean apart, the brothers began to write songs again, and something amazing happened. Playing new songs to each other over the phone as they worked, Dave and Serge discovered they had material that held together as a unique whole—a sort of urban romantic fable. With no money and nothing left to lose, they returned to their Philly garage to make *20,000 Streets Under the Sky,* a record some say is their strongest work to date. Along the way, they inked a deal with indie label Yep Roc and caught the view from the Giants Stadium stage courtesy of Bruce Springsteen.

Backstreets recently caught up with the Bielankos outside Brooklyn's Southpaw, prior to a brief pre-release tour in early June.

***Backstreets:* To me, this record kind of sounds like the record you've been waiting your whole lives to make. You've got the Springsteen, the Spector, the Gamble & Huff Philly sounds. And it's not just a collection of songs—it's a narrative. Every song tells a story and is also a piece of the larger picture.**

Serge: I like that. You know, we produced the first two records, and we produced the fourth one, so it's like we returned to what we know how to do. Our influences are what they are at this point—we can't skirt around them. I think we're really good at wearing them. The coolest thing is that it's starting to sound to me like one of our records and not like somebody else's record. Which is good. And it takes time to get to that point where it sounds like a Marah song now, whereas maybe in the past it just reminded people of this or that. But it's a lot of work. This record was made independently by design: there was no money from anybody, and we tried to make an unbelievable production, a sort of a timeless kind of production. It's very hard to sound that simple. This was made in a garage, this music was made outside of the business, and that made us really proud.

***Backstreets:* You left Philly and went to the U.K. to make the last record because things just weren't coming together, but you**

CASSANDRA TOMEI PHOTO

MARAH

the Cheap Seats

returned to Philly for this one. Talk a bit about the journey from there to here—what was it that drew you back home?

Dave: Every bit of music outside of *Float Away* we've ever done has been recorded in Philly. Our rehearsal spot—we've maintained that place. We've never really left Philadelphia. I don't live there now, but it means a lot to all of us. Serge is still there. As you travel around you realize how great a town like that is—how charming, and how cool, and how real. We had the means to go see some other stuff and had a wonderful time doing it. But you know to call us "expatriate" is a stupid, lazy way of saying.... I have writers that have been asking me, "I heard you guys moved to Ireland."

Serge: Your hometown is your hometown, and you can never have two. I mean, you can relocate somewhere and live the rest of your days there and ultimately become, like, a New Yorker, I suppose, if you lived here for ten years or whatever it takes. But you go back to the place where you're from, and you feel really comfortable—Philadelphia is where we began to write songs, Philadelphia is where we began our first band, Philadelphia is where we put out our first record, played our first live show. It's really natural for us to sort of go back there. In a lot of ways I think Marah represents being left to your own devices—life is tough, the music business is tough, everyday life for everyone is a struggle, and you figure it out. We've tried to convey that in our music, and definitely in the way that we've even made our records, behind the scenes. It's all been like, okay, how are we going to do this, it's going to be a struggle, we don't have a big record deal—very rarely have we had one—and so to go back there is comfortable, and in a cool way. To sort of say, okay, it's us against the world in a sense, but at least we've got the home turf. We've got the home field advantage here.

Backstreets: **What's immediately noticeable about your live show is its intensity—that's pretty rare these days. You always seem to maintain it whether you are playing for five people or 500. Where does that come from?**

Dave: I don't know, but that's definitely the reason that we're in a band. I'm sure there's some great subconscious study you could do to figure out why you become the way you are, but even when we're rehearsing it has to be fairly intense. You gotta mean it. We throw away a lot of songs—you gotta write until you feel like you can say this every night. I'm gonna sing "My Heart is the Bums on the Street" every night, and you gotta mean it.

Serge: It comes from loving your job! There are a lot of people who don't like their jobs, and they have to go every day. And we realize that we're lucky, and that it can all be yanked out from under you in a second, it really can. And to play in a rock 'n' roll band at age 30, 31, 32... it's all we do, it's all we've been able to do for four years, because that's our job. No matter how frustrating the business can be sometimes, how frustrating driving from city to city can be sometimes, and the van's breaking down, and you have no money... still, when you finally do get up on that stage, whether it's five people or 500, it sounds cliché but it's very, very cool to be able to just say, all right, this is how we're going to end our day now. Just playing electric guitars and singing these songs that we've written that mean a lot to us, that obviously means something to the people that showed up.

There are a lot of great live bands out there, and I think there's a lot that aren't that great. It's partially that you have to care about it. We've obviously looked at the masters—we look at bands like The Who and Springsteen. Those guys, they meant it. They gave it all to their audience. Offstage, we're not those kind of people. I can talk, but I'm not a super-extrovert. I'm pretty shy. I've hung out with Bruce Springsteen—he's a great person, but he's not going to jump up on the kitchen table while you're having dinner! He's a great conversationalist, he's really calm, collected, wonderful to just talk to about things. Then you see him on that stage, and he seems almost larger than life. That's part of the gig, you know, to present yourself in that light—like movie actors, anything in "show biz," there's an element of it that you have to turn on the juice when you walk out in front of the stage lights.

Backstreets: **Last summer you guys were at a lot of Bruce's stadium shows. What's your opinion of stadium shows in general and of Bruce's stadium shows?**

Dave: Yeah, we were very fortunate that Bruce took care of us for that tour, because we saw all those gigs sort of in the front of the stage. Now, the perspective when you actually mount the stage and look out there, it's a whole different gig.

Serge: It was a dream come true. Just to be able to see those shows, and especially to see them while we were making the record, to be that inspired. We were making *Kids in Philly* when Bruce first did the Reunion [Tour 1999-2000] and I remember going to shows at the [then] First Union Center. We had tickets for the first night, and we weren't even halfway through that very show and I remember looking at Dave and just saying, like, there's no way that we can go to sleep tomorrow night knowing that he's playing here again and we're not gonna be there! We did everything that we could. We didn't know Bruce at that point, and it was so inspiring during the making of *Kids in Philly* just to see somebody who believes so much in what they do night-in, night-out and believes in their music.

Again, this time around with this *Rising* tour was just fabulous. This time we knew him, and they slid us a pass, and they said, "Look, come when you want," and that's really, really one of the greatest gifts that we've ever gotten from anyone. It was such a great thing, 'cause we're no one—we're not like a huge band. I think they appreciated our interest; we've always gotten along, as far as that goes. And to see those shows, as many as we got to see, we know how lucky we were. So many of my friends are huge fans of Bruce Springsteen, and I saw them struggle for tickets and stuff , and so it'll never be lost on us. You know, if somehow we could ever repay the favor.... But what a great experience, what a great way to spend the summer. We were working our asses off recording 12 hours a day, every day, and every once in a while there would be a show in the area that we could go to and just forget about everything and just let loose, and that's the greatest thing.

Bruce pulls it off in a stadium, as far as I'm concerned. I don't go to any other stadium shows, I don't know who even plays stadiums anymore. I'd go see the Stones, and I'd go if something really interested me, but at the same time, I can't afford to even pay $100 or $200.

Backstreets: **What is it about Philly that makes Bruce's shows there so special? They always seem to be among the most memorable for fans.**

Dave: Philly has obviously got a lot to do with Bruce. I think that Philly was great to Bruce, and he really gives back. Night one [of the stadium shows] in Philly this time was

almost like a comedy show— they were having so much fun.

Serge: It just seems like there's this relationship between the city and him and the band, where he's going to go out there and prove it every night—prove it all night, every night. But it doesn't have the global focus that, say, New York might have. It doesn't have people standing there folding their arms and saying "Prove it to me." These people are already ready to just have a great time— Philly crowds can be like that in a lot of ways that some bigger-city crowds often aren't. And it's really refreshing, it's really cool to see a show like that. Those three shows at the new football stadium [Lincoln Financial Field] were just absolutely phenomenal—what an amazing thing to see in your home city. We were just in shock and awe every night by the end. We'd just go back to our neighborhood bar, have a couple beers, and just be like, god, what a great way to spend a couple summer nights.

Backstreets: **And what's it like at Giants Stadium from the stage perspective looking down?**

Dave: It was really cool. Right before we went on we asked [Springsteen assistant] Terry Magovern—we were like, "Terry, can we get a beer?" Because there's, like, 65,000 people, probably more people than we've ever played to put together all at one time.

Serge: The next night we came to the show again, and one of the first things I did when the show began was walk back by myself to the very back of the stadium. I couldn't believe it, because from the stage it just doesn't feel like it's that enormous. And I hadn't done that at any of the other shows that we had been to, so I walked back and I found Dave, and I said "Look, you gotta come back here and see... you gotta see what was lookin' at us last night." And we walked back and just kind of stared up. It was just an amazing thing being on stage with Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band—my God, you know, it's in New Jersey, his home turf, and nothing could ever replace that for us. It's just a thrill that, forever, no matter what happens to us now, it's like, *we got to do that.*

And he kinda let us pick the song. He said, "What song you wanna do?" And I knew he hadn't done ["Raise Your Hand"] on that tour, and I wanted to do something that was new. We ran it by him, and he was like, "Yeah, that sounds cool, let's try that." So at the soundcheck I walked up to the mic and I sang full tilt with Bruce, and I think I scared him a little! Backstage afterward, he was like, "Okay..."—and it was a friendly reminder—he was like, "and *I'll* be frontin'." And I was like all right, I gotta remember *[laughs]*... but it was such a great night.

Dave: It was funny, Bruce calls up maybe a month before, and he was like, "I didn't know you guys were in Philly—you should come up to do a song in New York." So we're like, "All right, we'll figure it out the week of the show," and he was like, "All right, bye." *Click.* So gettin' on the week of the show, we're like, "What fuckin' song are we gonna play?" So I call him back up and Patti was like, "Bruce they wanna know what song they're doing!" He was like, "Oh, we'll figure it out, just show up at sound check." [With "Raise Your Hand"], we sorta thought that we could sing back and forth, and that song would make sense, and plus again, he hadn't done that in a while.

Serge: It was also just a very sort of Marah tune to do *[laughs].*

Backstreets: **So what's your relationship with Bruce like these days? Do you just call each other up and chat?**

Dave: We haven't sent him this record yet, no. I haven't seen him since the end of the tour—givin' the Boss a little time off. I think he's writing stuff.

Serge: Yeah, one of these days we'll run into him, and we'll definitely send him a letter and the new record and [would] love to hear what he thinks. But it's the kind of thing where you meet somebody like that, and he's your hero, and he's been more than gracious—you don't abuse it. What are we gonna do? Also, we keep pretty busy ourselves. If we happen to be in the area, we'll call him up. And you know, I think Bruce loves the music—the times that we have hung out, it's like, "What are you listening to? What's good?" He's very interested.

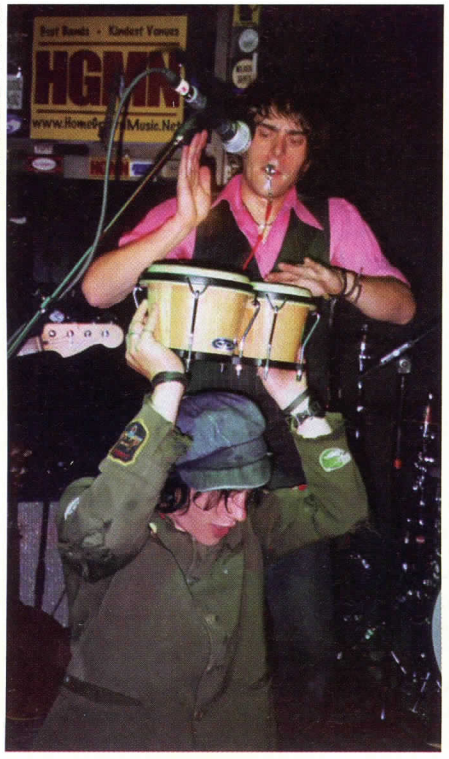
They're great people, they're just really down-to-earth people, and they have every reason in the world that they don't have to be. But [Bruce] is probably one of my greatest heroes. And not just on stage and record and stuff, but how he's lived his life. That's as inspiring to us as anything. People draw this comparison between us and him, and I think our music is different. If you've listened to something since you were 12 years old, you're going to be influenced by it, but at the same time, you'd be hard pressed to show me one song of ours that sounds exactly like a Bruce song. I don't hear it, anyway. But just the way that he's handled his career: dodging bullets at times, and dealing with things that for a lot of artists are huge setbacks. I think on a much smaller scale, we've tried to do that with our band and with our career. Hey, you know what, you never wanna veer into drugs, you never wanna veer into alcoholism, you never wanna veer into being an improper person. It really is about playing music for people every night and making these records that might move people if you're lucky. That's what it is: you get this opportunity, and then so many people just trash it, bash it, abuse it. Nowadays, I think what he stands for is lost in a lot of ways in pop music and pop culture. To be real, to be heartfelt, to be somebody that believes so much in what they're doing. Sadly, it's not the norm.

Backstreets: **Steve Van Zandt's *Underground Garage* radio show is really taking off, and Garage Rock is getting out there a little bit—people are being opened up to different types of music with bands like the Strokes and the Von Bondies. Do you think there is a little more room for your music out there on the radio and with audiences?**

Dave: Well, I think our music... you might say it has a common thread, it has that same ambition, but it's a little bit different than that sort of music. It's great to see that shit happen. But I always would gravitate towards Otis Redding before I would The Kinks, that's just me. I like that sort of thing.

Serge: I think we have systematically stopped trying to process what the cycles of the music business are. We like what we like, we play what we play, we try and do it the best that we can. Other than that, if rock bands make it big on the radio, it's like, awesome; if they don't,

ANNA SELDEN PHOTOS



SARAH GROSS PHOTO

The current Marah line-up (L-R): Jon Wurster, Serge Bielanko, Kirk "The Barber" Henderson, Dave Bielanko, Mike "Slo-Mo" Brenner.

I'm not going to lose any sleep over it. I think the bands that you named are great bands. The Strokes are a great band—their star took off, and hopefully they can keep it going. Obviously certain bands get breaks, other ones don't. But if you believe in what you're doing and there's people that want to follow that, then whether it's a fan base of a few thousand or it's a fan base of a million hipsters or whatever—fair enough.

***Backstreets:* The music business is obviously on the decline—it's clear that things are not going to be the same in five years, and musicians are getting a lot more power as a result, a lot more creative control. Whether you want it to or not, it's sort of falling into your lap. How has that worked out for you?**

Dave: That's a great question. Early this year, Serge played me that song "Feather Boa"; one thing led to another, and we decided it was time for us to move forward. The first thing we had to do was clip almost every existing tie that we had: record company, booking agents, everything. Everything had reached a tipping point, so to speak, and looking forward to the best of our ability, there are no more rules. You know, there are a lot of hip young bands or whatever that are operating on a hype level right now. God bless 'em, I wish 'em luck... It's hard to maintain integrity. You grow up doing this, be cool, keep your head, it don't happen that much, and it won't happen for a lot of those bands.

With that in mind, I think that we needed to become incredibly independent. We needed to imprint our own records and find an indie [label] in America and an indie in Europe and say, "This is the way we're going to go about it." Then the catch with that is that there was no money to do it. So there's absolutely nothin', but we were very passionate about this, and our manager and everybody was on our side. There's a lot of people that wanna help us out. We found a way to get it done. We're not like U2, where I can tweak a record for three years and things like that. It was like, lay down these tracks, and get on our feet.

My only regret up to this point has been that I didn't make more music, that I didn't record more music through the years, and I wanna change that. Because those are the old ways that things used to be done, and quite frankly, we work other people *stupid*. There's no reason that we shouldn't be putting a record out every two years, every year, you know. We can work band members into early graves, and we work 'cause that's what we do. We're nervous, east coast kind of workaholic people, and for us to do that and guide our own path... that independence thing is going to become bigger and bigger in music. There's definitely no rule book right now.

***Backstreets:* I know you guys both read a lot. How does that influence what you write—or does it?**

Serge: Oh yeah, it influences us tremendously. Probably as much as other records, if not more at certain times. I read all kind of books, so does Dave—we try and find influence wherever we can get it. Movies are really influential to me. This time around, I spent a lot of time watching so many films—a lot of Spike Lee films, a lot of Woody Allen films. These are two great guys who captured their city—city life—in such different lights, but yet you could watch one of their films after the other guy's and they both work hand in hand somehow. It's like a night in a big town, this is what's going on.

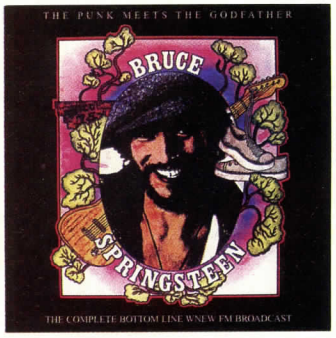
Yeah, all kind of books, music... people hand us books on the road. It's such a great thrill—we read them all. Dave eats novels. I do a lot of the driving, so Dave can read five times as much as I can. He'll read a novel in three or four days, and then we've gotta pool our money together and stop at a Barnes & Noble—he's like, "I gotta get another one." So he's a terrible conversationalist on the road, 'cause if you have to ask him a question he has to lift his head out of a book, and he'll be like, "Uh, okay," and then he's back reading again.

Great songwriters end up stealing or being influenced by other things, and I'm sure that if you look around you'd find that other musicians do read. And the same goes hopefully for writers, stealing ideas or themes from good music and songs. It's all art at the end of the day—it's just art that's there to move you, and hopefully affect you in some way.

Look for Marah to be out on the road in the U.S. and Europe through early spring 2005. Visit their website at www.marah-usa.com for information, tour dates and related merchandise.

ON COLLECTING

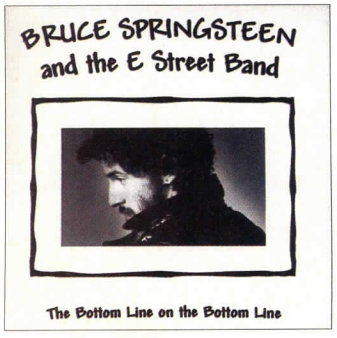
By Fred Mills



The Punk Meets the Godfather
(Godfather 2CD)
The Bottom Line on the Bottom Line
(Hot Stuff 2CDR)
VENUE: The Bottom Line
CITY: New York, NY
DATE: August 15, 1975
SOUND QUALITY: 8.5/6.5
PERFORMANCE: 10/10
PACKAGING: 10/9

This, of course, is the famous Bottom Line performance (early show) broadcast live over WNEW-FM, It was subsequently bootlegged during the vinyl era (*The Great White Boss*, *The Boss is Back*) and in more modern times on CD (Triangle's *Lost in the Flood*, and most famously, Great Dane's *Live at the Bottom Line*). A year or so ago Main Stream took a stab at it as *Down in the Bottom*, and now we have the latest entries in the dueling bootlegs contest.

In addition to bootlegs, the show has also generated its share of complaints over the years, chiefly regarding overall sound quality (excessive hiss, plus a persistent clicking noise), but also due to a few songs having cuts—most notably closing number "Quarter to Three," which got its ending shaved off. And in an apparent quest for an upgraded source tape, Main Stream even presented a severely edited version of "Kitty's Back" (5:31, compared to the full 18:39)—not a good thing.



The bottom line on *The Bottom Line on The Bottom Line* is that it's probably a "remastered" copy of the Main Stream release, as evidenced by the presence of the truncated "Kitty" (there's also a small splice between "Then She Kissed Me" and "Growin' Up"). The sound quality *is* an improvement over Great Dane's version, however. And the packaging is sharp: custom labels for the pro CD-Rs, a photo-crammed eight-page booklet and a double-sleeved mini-LP jacket.

Godfather, however, has an offer you can't refuse with *The Punk Meets the Godfather*. Text in the booklet indicates than an entirely new source was tapped—more on that in a minute—and indeed, you get *greatly* improved sound (not perfect, but far, far better than on *TBLOTBL*). You also get the entire show without any of the above-mentioned cuts (the full "Kitty's Back" is present) and featuring the complete DJ commentary as originally aired at the start, middle and conclusion of the broadcast. Some versions of the show, including Hot Stuff's, have included portions of the DJ chatter but not all of it. Which brings us to that new source: we actually have someone besides Godfather to thank for bringing this full, original broadcast to light. A Bruce collector, after much searching, finally unearthed the recording in its entirety on a reel-to-reel tape earlier this year and made it available on the Web as an SHN file under the name *The Way It Was*. Wrote the collector, "It is not the final word on this show in terms of sound quality, but it is the complete broadcast, without anything missing. All the station breaks and DJ chat and such are there. Turn it on and listen to it just like you would have back in August 1975." Godfather additionally employed substantial noise reduction to *The Way It Was,* and if this still isn't "the final word," it's getting close. Even if the DJ commentary isn't important to you, clean sonics certainly should be. With the "clicking" sound largely absent and the hiss greatly reduced, *The Punk Meets the Godfather,* sounds fantastic; the "presence" stereo imaging seems better, too.

Godfather further ups the collector ante with tri-fold cardboard "wallet" packaging (the front of the sleeve is a nod to the old Great Dane cover), a four-page booklet, and a bonus track at the end of disc 2, a soundboard recording of "Jungleland" (from the Bottom Line a year earlier, July 14, 1974). For now, this stands as the definitive version of a genuinely classic moment in Brucedom.

The Clear Difference
(Anubis 3CDR)
VENUE: Ullevi Stadium
CITY: Gothenburg, Sweden
DATE: June 8, 1985
SOUND QUALITY: 7
PERFORMANCE: 8
PACKAGING: 9

Here we have a cleaned-up, remastered version of the three-LP title of the same name—technically, *(The) Clear Difference*—issued in the '80s on Spacematic. It's part of Anubis' "vinyl plus" series which, to date, has yielded a number of impressive flashbacks.

Similar to the label's treatment of the old vinyl boot *Do You Love Me* (Brendan Byrne Arena, August 16, 1984), *The Clear Difference* reproduces the original album artwork for its front and rear CD tray panels, adding a colorful eight-page booklet. Since the vinyl set also had a bonus seven-inch single ("Seeds," London 7/3/85; "Rockin' All Over the World," Leeds 7/7/85), included is a three-inch CD-R duplicating that as well. As with all Anubis releases, the pro CD-R set is limited to 99 hand-numbered copies, with discs and artwork all housed in an oversized outer envelope.

Soundwise, the show was always a fairly good, if somewhat crowd-noisy, audience recording, so all Anubis had to do was tweak things a bit, perhaps some denoising and bass-boosting. Highlights include the cover of "Trapped" which surges directly into "Prove It All Night," and a closing 14-minute finale of "Twist and Shout"/"Do You Love Me." It seems like over the years a lot of Bruce fans have come to look upon the *Born in the U.S.A.* stadium shows as lesser affairs, but while the arena shows tend to boast better sound and more diverse setlists, this is still a fine artifact to own.

Christmas Soul Night
(Crystal Cat 3CD)
VENUE: Convention Hall
CITY: Asbury Park, NJ
DATE: December 8, 2003
SOUND QUALITY: 8
PERFORMANCE: 9
PACKAGING: 9

Springsteen's 2003 holiday shows, as exhaustively reported on in *Backstreets* #79, closed out with the longest concert of the three-night stand (about three hours) on December 8. Crystal Cat's latest top-shelf Bruce production comes from an audience tape that, considering the notoriously dicey acoustics of Convention Hall, is amazingly clean. There's good stereo separation, not too much distracting crowd noise (though lots of singing along), and the instruments and vocals are all distinct. Striking artwork with photos from the concert adorns CC's 12-page booklet.

With three full disc's worth of material here, the highlights are many. Although as good as, say, the tunes from Jesse Malin, Garland Jeffreys and Southside Johnny are, it's pretty hard not to zero directly in on disc two. It kicks off with three Bruce gems: "Seaside Bar Song," a ten-minute "Thundercrack," and a piano version of "The Wish." After that

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With the October mini-tour still to come and with few surprise appearances and shows so far this year, CD-R and DVD-R trading circles have been quiet the past several months. Still, even in slow times, there's always something new to be tracked down. Let's start with the *Rising* tour, with several new upgrades and remasters of existing recordings. "Juan Samuez" was able to mix two different audience recordings of the last Giants Stadium show to come up with something that may not be Crystal Cat-esque, but is certainly a significant upgrade over the two recordings on their own. The August 31, 2003 amalgam, called *The Summer Wind Remaster,* also includes bonus tracks from August 28 ("From Small Things") and August 30. Another Giants Stadium upgrade is from July 27, the finale of the first set of shows, and this one has much more depth and clarity than previous versions.

The only known recording from the 2003 Detroit show on September 21 was marred by digital noise on several tracks, but an upgrade has been located. While the two sound similar, fans of the show will want to track down the new one.

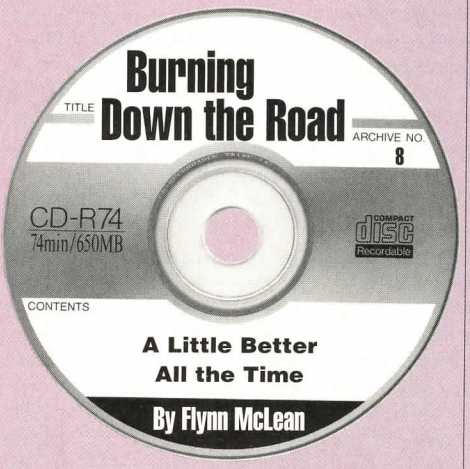
To complete the *Rising* tour, the creator behind *The 2002 Tour* and the two 2003 tour compilations that followed *(Vol 1: Duluth to Montreal* and *Vol 2: Europe)* put together a six-disc set that covers the last leg of the tour, July through October 2003. Titled *2003 Tour Vol 3: North American Stadiums,* this final installment is a thoroughly enjoyable (and long) listen, a tsunami of rarities and excellent recordings.

Recordings of two shows from the *Rising* tour have yet to surface in any format: the March 22 and March 28, 2003 concerts in Sydney, Australia and Auckland, New Zealand. An MP3 of "War" from Sydney, complete with power outages, was posted to ABMS earlier this year, so a recording does exist. But where's the rest of it?

In DVD-R news from the *Rising* tour, the Cincinnati Tapers Consortium are back with another title, *Milwaukee Lites.* Documenting the September 27, 2003, show from Miller Park, the release incorporates three cameras—two from the audience and one on the screen—utilizes an excellent under-circulated audio recording to great effect. The CTC's usual outstanding production values are there, including a bonus clip of "Local Hero" from the September 21, 2003 Detroit show that incorporates pictures of the legendary "Doberman and Bruce Lee."

PERHAPS THE COOLEST RECORDING to surface over the last six months has been a soundboard recording from the February 21, 1995 show at Tramps in New York City. The occasion was a video shoot for "Murder Incorporated," but the newly reunited E Street Band didn't stop there. Appropriately titled "The Original Reunion," this set contains the complete show plus an intriguing soundcheck that features Bruce and the Band learning "Murder Incorporated." Although fascinating, the soundcheck is not something that will warrant repeat listenings. Two songs from the set—one of the many "Murder Inc."s and "Little Latin Lupe Lu"—had previously surfaced on *Deep Down in the Vaults.*

Had this recording surfaced prior to the 1999-2000 Reunion Tour, fans would have tripped all over themselves trying to get a copy of this one, as it was one of only four performances featuring Bruce and the E Street Band between 1988 and 1999 (along with the Sony Studios and *David Letterman* shows from April 5, 1995, and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame concert from September



2, 1995). This one definitely features the most enthusiastic performance of the three. But with so many great recordings from the Reunion and *Rising* tours, this one almost becomes an afterthought. The recording does, however, put to rest an urban legend among Bruce fans in that the long 1978-style introduction to "Prove It All Night" was played during the show. The long intro was not performed; in fact, Bruce was unsure if he would even be able to remember the words to the song. Now if we can only put to rest the urban legend that says Bruce played six-hour shows on the *Born in the U.S.A.* tour.

The recording is sourced from an incredible soundboard tape, so while the performances are raw (Bruce and the E Street Band hadn't played together onstage in nearly six-and-a-half years), you can hear every instrument and, just as importantly, Bruce's on-stage banter. Of course, as he himself mentioned from the stage, you better like "Murder Incorporated," as it appears six times during the show.

IF THERE'S ONE LEGENDARY SHOW from the '70s that is just screaming out to be released as part of a Springsteen "Live Archives" series (fingers are getting cramped from being crossed so long), it's the August 15, 1975, show from the Bottom Line. (And if you have to ask what was special about the show, please put this magazine down and read Dave Marsh's *Born to Run.* Now.) Despite being broadcast on WNEW-FM, audio from that night always sounded uneven and contained a ticking sound throughout most of the show; neither a pre-broadcast nor a soundboard recording has surfaced in the nearly 30 years since. Despite numerous releases of this show, first on vinyl and then on CD, none of them ever featured the pre- and post-show comments from DJs Richard Neer and Dave Herman and their boxer-like interviews with Bruce.

That absence always annoyed many people who were listening live on that hot August night in the New York City area, and one fan finally did something about it: he tracked down a complete reel-to-reel recording, used other recordings to patch over a few gaps, and circulated it among the fan community under the title *The Way It Was: The Complete Bottom Line Broadcast 8/15/1975.* Finally, fans can experience the show "the way it was" on that hot August night. The audio has not been improved from previous releases, but that's easy to overlook, considering this was one of the most important shows in Bruce's career, and in the history of rock 'n' roll. It's worth noting that the Godfather label subsequently issued this recording as *The Punk Meets the Godfather* [see this issue's "On Collecting"], with some noticeable improvements in noise reduction and overall sound that make it the definitive version—at least for now.

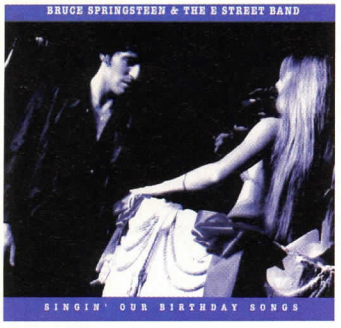
The most recent installment of the Stone Pony London message board's live series (www.stoneponylondon.net/live-collection) is a one-disc collection of Elvis Presley covers—just in time for the 50-year celebration of Elvis's first recording—called *SPL Live Collection Volume 11: Follow That Dream.* The set features tracks from 1971 ("C.C. Rider") all the way to 2003 ("Mystery Train") and showcases Bruce's obvious admiration of the King. Most of the sources are well-known to most traders, including *Roxy Night, Paramount Night,* and *A Night for the Vietnam Veteran,* but having those tracks together makes for a very inspiring listen.

WITH THE RELEASE OF PATTI SCIALFA'S second album, *23rd Street Lullaby,* now is the perfect time to look at two releases that highlight her solo material. The first set, *I'm a Big Girl Now,* collects outtakes from the late '80s and early '90s, including the Bruce-penned "Burning Love," and performances and interviews from the *Rumble Doll* publicity tour of summer 1993, plus the performance of "Love's Glory" from the January 31, 1998 Patrick King Benefit. The second volume, *Some Things Baby,* features additional performances from the summer 1993 publicity tour, parts of two songs she sang during the "Tenth Avenue Freeze-out" band introductions on the Reunion tour, and four songs from the 2000 and 2001 holiday shows in Asbury Park. Of special note is the inclusion of five songs (spread across the two sets) from her August 28, 1993 show from Boulder, Colorado, which, until April of this year, was the only full concert performance of her Columbia-era solo career.

Continued from page 46

comes the Sam Moore segment, which simply has to be heard to be believed if you weren't at the show. (I wasn't, though in October of '99 I got a teaser when I attended the Phoenix, AZ concert where Moore came out to duet with Bruce on "Soul Man.") The songs with Moore are worth acquiring the set for alone, no lie—and consider disc three's 13-minute "Kitty's Back" icing on an already well-iced cake.

Included are four bonus cuts: "From Small Things," "Love on the Wrong Side of Town" and "Mary's Place" (from 12/5) and "This Time Baby's Gone for Good" (from 12/7), all songs not performed on the final night.



Singin' Our Birthday Songs
(Godfather 3CD)
VENUE: Capitol Theater
CITY: Passaic, NJ
DATE: September 21, 1978
SOUND QUALITY: 9
PERFORMANCE: 10
PACKAGING: 9

The September 19-21, 1978, *Darkness* tour stand at the Capitol Theater has justifiably passed into legend as one of the greatest ever E Street residencies. All three nights are available as soundboard recordings, and video footage exists from the 19th and 20th. The 9/19 show was additionally broadcast live over WNEW-FM and has yielded several classic boots. In the early '90s the Scorpio label issued the soundboard from 9/21 as *The Bosses* [sic] *Birthday Party*, and while quite good, it was incomplete, lacking the end of the concert (e.g., half of "Tenth Avenue Freeze-out" and all of "Quarter to Three").

The full soundboard tape remains elusive, as Godfather's new booting appears to simply copy the Scorpio title, although this fresh "remaster" does yield a substantially better-sounding show, with virtually no hiss and more presence. The show itself is superb, featuring unexpected covers ("High School Confidential," "Sweet Little Sixteen" and an early-for-the-season "Santa Claus is Coming to Town") plus all the great *Darkness* mainstays. A funny moment comes when Bruce blows his lines during the intro of "Racing in the Street," and this show also marked the last public performance of "Kitty's Back" for many years.

Rounding out disc three are five bonus tracks from the oft-bootlegged September 30, 1978 Atlanta show, an FM broadcast, and packaging-wise you get a tri-fold "wallet" design (like a miniature triple LP set) liberally decorated with black-and-white photos. The cover is priceless: with Bruce's birthday coming up, the band presented him with a huge cake containing a young lady, and he's pictured gazing slack-jawed and glassy-eyed at his lingerie-clad "gift"!

Mercedes Ranch
(Cat's Meow 3CDR)
VENUE: Equestrian Stadium Riem
CITY: Munich, Germany
DATE: July 17, 1988
SOUND QUALITY: 7
PERFORMANCE: 8
PACKAGING: 2

This issue's "bizarre art concept" award: The front cover features an incongruous outdoor scene, while the rear features a collage of "Tunnel of Love" images: a poster for the Doris Day movie *Tunnel of Love*, a vibrator (!) called the "Tunnel of Love," a record sleeve from the Insane Clown Posse titled *Tunnel of Love*, Bruce's LP sleeve, etc. But there's no info about the music: no track listing or date/venue, just a notation—incorrect, it turns out—reading "Berlin 1988." To assist the discriminating consumer, we combed the databases and discovered this to be from the July 17 *Tunnel of Love* stop in Munich. It was the show where "Havin' a Party" was introduced to the setlist, and the closing "Twist and Shout"/"Havin' a Party" medley is unique as it interpolates "La Bamba" and "Do You Love Me."

Available early on as a five-LP set titled *Who'll Stop the Rain* and more recently on CD-R as *Do You Love Me*, this has a similar setlist to most Euro *Tunnel* shows. It's a moderately good (if marked by excessive crowd noise in places) audience recording, although better-sounding tapes from the tour certainly exist. Worth owning for the music itself, *Mercedes Ranch* still gets serious points docked for the crummy packaging: *caveat emptor.*

Backstreets *does not endorse the illegal sale of bootleg recordings, nor can we advise as to their legality or how they may be obtained.*

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CLASSIFIEDS

PERSONALS

TO MICHAEL: THIS CHRISTMAS, YOU AND ME, James, Junior, and Burt all gonna meet down at the Cadillac Ranch!

THANKS TO MR. AND MRS. VALPO FOR A SUPER 4th of July. You rock and so did John Eddie.

SPANISH JOHNNY LOOKING FOR PUERTO Rican Jane in Central PA (near Johnstown) to talk shop and whatever. Tramps Like Us... e-mail: E_Street99@yahoo.com

MARRIAGE MINDED: I DESIRE TO MEET A special lady, to devote myself to, who will change my life forever. Could you be the one.... Please see my website at www.areuready.com/mm

TO CHANDLER: LIVING PROOF YOUR PARENTS are raising you right when at age 9, you are making eloquent observations about the use of the name Mary in all those Bruce songs. Rock on, little girl.

WANTED

SEEKING BRUCE FANS IN JAPAN TO HELP THE Springsteen Special Collection. Many Japanese music magazines already in the Springsteen Special Collection of books and magazines at the Asbury Park Public Library, but we still seek many issues of Music Life, FM, FM Fan, JAM and others, along with Japanese fanzines including *The River.* See our complete want list at www.asburypark.lib.nj.us (click on The Bruce Springsteen Collection) and contact us at pbjcrane@erols.com for information on donating.

BRUCE FAN HAS EVERYTHING EXCEPT THE songs "The Hitter" and "In Michigan." Who can help? Mario Hermann, Am Floessgraben 6, 9987, Georgenthal, Germany.

WANTED: BRUCE, STEVE AND MAX LOOKALIKES. Call Charming Red at 267-226-4013.

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ORIGINAL SPRINGSTEEN PRINTS FROM *Nebraska* session photographer David Michael Kennedy. Apart Contemporary Fine Art & Framing Gallery in Asbury Park. 732-988-7377.

NEW BOSS LOCATION, SAME GREAT BOSS TASTE Backstreet Records has a new HQ—as of August, we've moved (along with all of our CDs, T-shirts, and other Bruce memorabilia for sale) to North Carolina: 1818 Airport Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27514. Reach us by phone at (919) 968-9466 or 1-800-326-BOSS, and by fax at (919) 968-9622. But that's all that has changed: as always, visit our online shop at Backstreets.com for all your Boss needs!

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"TILLIE," from page 12

ing Tillie, the gigantic mural made famous in a nighttime photograph with Springsteen and the E Street band in the early '70s. Perched high up on the Cookman Avenue facade, Tillie had evolved over 48 years from amusement park novelty to community icon, surviving and winning friends even after the neon was switched off for the last time in November 1988, when the Palace went black.

The Tillie rescue was first envisioned during Save Tillie's formative days in 1998, as the organization of Springsteen fans, fans of historic amusement parks, and friends of Asbury Park fought to save the entire Palace. When that dream was crushed under the combined pressure of politics and developer dollars, Save Tillie put in motion a plan devised by Gary Loveland (president of the steel fabricating firm Universal Fabricators of Jackson, NJ, and a longtime member of Save Tillie), comprised in equal parts of steel, skill, and luck.

VALERIE WAGNER PHOTO

Tillie hits the road for a tour of Asbury Park.

Over four days in mid-June, Loveland, Save Tillie volunteers, and a crew of sawing experts, steel fabricators and welders separated Tillie from the Palace, sawing through foot-thick cinder blocks, and surrounding the mural with a steel frame until the entire 14-foot width, 16-foot height, and 10 tons of Tillie were fully supported by the frame.

At the critical moment, Sash Francese, a crane operator with hands and nerves of a surgeon, gently maneuvered Tillie skyward for eight agonizing, tension-filled minutes until the mural swung free over the top of the Palace. Francese lowered Tillie onto a truck, and with a canny sense of history, Tillie was driven by Loveland at the head of an impromptu parade past the Casino, the Stone Pony, Madame Marie's, and Convention Hall en route to storage. A few weeks later, Loveland's team repeated the feat, removing the bumper car murals from the Lake Avenue facade.

What now? Developers have promised to build a new structure at Cookman and Kingsley that will capture "the spirit" of the Palace. A permit issued by the State of New Jersey requires developers to reuse Tillie, the bumper car murals, and exterior Palace signs and murals in the new building. The Save Tillie organization is settled in for the duration to make sure the State's mandate is fully realized. And Tillie waits in storage for the day everything comes back.

Bob Crane is a Backstreets *contributor who, six years ago, got upset because no one was planning to save anything from the Palace before its scheduled demolition in July of 1998. So he did something about it, recruiting four co-conspirators for a plan that ultimately produced the Save Tillie organization, a National Register of Historic Places listing for the Palace, and a five-and-a-half year battle against the politics of bulldozer redevelopment.*

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#80 - SUMMER 2004

"RCDS," continued from page 13

ment, with Bruce starting the first verse as a slowed-down, solo electric performance. The band joined in after the first chorus, with only light percussion, keyboards and bass. A saxophone solo was substituted for the standard organ solo, and the song was missing its traditional audience sing-along.

While the Springsteen songs proved to be favorites of the crowd, what set this show apart from all others were the tremendous covers. Mr. Sam Moore's recent visit to Asbury Park apparently lingered in Bruce's memory, as he pulled out three of the four songs he performed with Moore last December. Bruce channeled Solomon Burke during "Everybody Needs Somebody to Love," trying to find out if there were women in the audience with men who "haven't been able to pay attention," women who "feel unappreciated" and "just need a little affection."

Patti Scialfa offered significant contributions to the show, taking lead vocals on "Tell Him" as she did in years past, and also providing the backup vocals as Bruce sang lead on "Respect." She traded off lines with Bruce on "You Really Got a Hold on Me" to great effect. Bruce took a moment to remind the audience about her forthcoming new album, saying "It's damn good... I guarantee it!"

Following a raffle drawing (the prize was an autographed guitar), "Tenth Avenue Freeze-out" kicked off a tremendous encore complete with the original horn parts. When the change was made uptown, it was RCDS headmaster Mr. Small who "joined the band." After "Tenth," Bruce called up a number of the RCDS teachers to the stage, noting that "we've got the school of rock going on here!" Warning the crowd that "we might have one more," the band kicked into an extended version of "Twist and Shout." Southside Johnny entered the building to join the band on "Havin' a Party" to seemingly end the show.

Bruce, however, wasn't quite finished. He had one more question: *"Do you like good music?"* And with that, the band kicked into the long-lost "Sweet Soul Music," which hadn't been performed by Bruce with any sort of regularity since the *Tunnel of Love* tour. After numerous "spotlights," the song was followed by an impromptu version of the Champs' "Tequila" (the drink of choice in the Stone Pony that evening) before returning to a reprise of "Sweet Soul Music."

Most Bruce fans may never make it to the right side of the door of the Stone Pony to see one of these shows. As Bruce reminded the crowd during "Sweet Soul Music," "spotlight on the parents—they paid a shitload of money!" The shows do, however, remain a fascinating document of Bruce's musical influences and favorite songs. Since Bruce started the RCDS benefits in 2002, a few of the covers have made it to public performance—"Tell Me Why," "Get out of Denver," and of course, "Seven Nights to Rock." One can only hope that this event continues to produce similar results.

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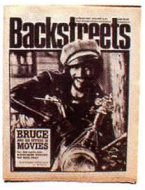

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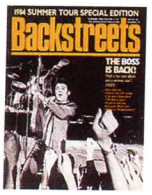

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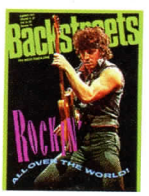

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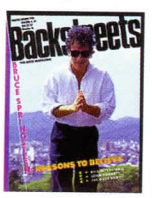

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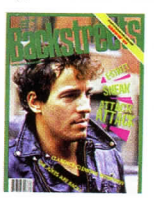

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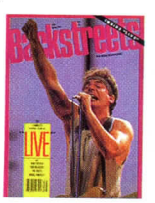

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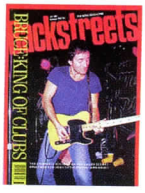

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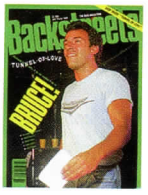

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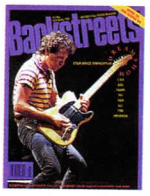

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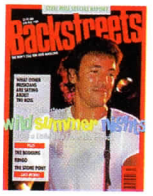

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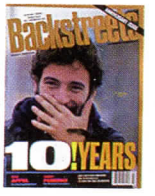

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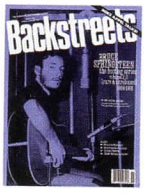

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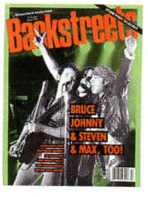

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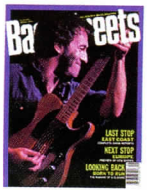

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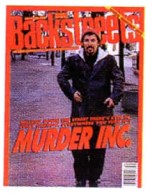

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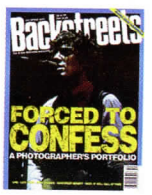

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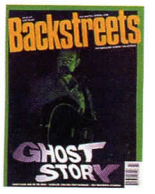

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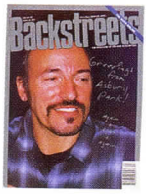

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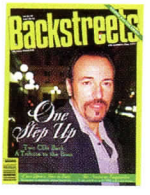

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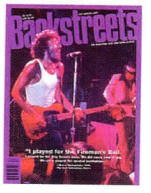

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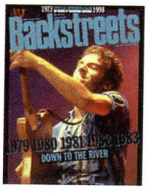

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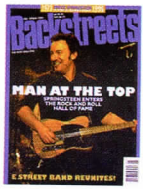

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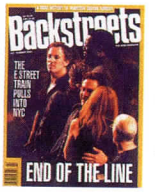

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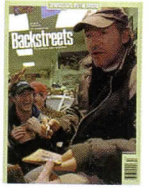

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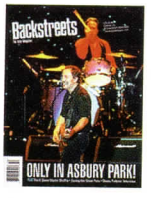

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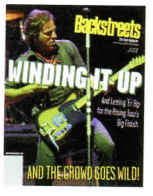

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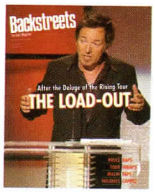

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